

EARL SIMON
A TRILOGY
BY WALLACE B. NICHOLS

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EARL SIMON

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

JERICHO STREET AND SELECTED POEMS

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"'Jericho Street' is full of a warm and various human interest, and will be read with poignant pleasure by the curious-minded, who, like the reviewer, have often wondered, when walking at night down some decorous suburban street, what strange things would be revealed if the fronts of all the discreetly illumined houses could be swung open like that of a doll's house. . . . It is to the credit of Mr. Wallace Nichols that he is an eager experimentalist in quite un-Georgian regions, and that he is never beguiled into the false *bergerie* or the fallacious *simplesse* which are characteristic of so much of our latter-day verse. . . . We shall watch for his next book of verse in hopes of a further fulfilment of a promise that ripens slowly but surely."—*The Morning Post*.

"In 'Jericho Street' Mr. Nichols seems to have discovered himself, and if he develops his powers we shall come to congratulate him heartily on his discovery. 'Jericho Street' is original. . . . Mr. Nichols has sympathy and dramatic sense. He feels, and makes us feel, what his characters are feeling; they are realities, not 'stunts,' and the kind of language in which he writes of them, with its rapid interchange of eloquence and colloquialism, is perfectly suitable to its subject."

The Saturday Review.

"'Jericho Street' is a book of vital interest and outstanding merit."—*The Bookman*.

"'Jericho Street' is a street in London, and Mr. Nichols treats it as an illustration of the comedies and tragedies of everyday life. He takes us from house to house at random, and shows us what is happening in each of them, and in this way produces about thirty descriptive poems on the inhabitants of Jericho Street. Mr. Nichols succeeds where many others have failed in giving an intense human interest to his epic. Each of the poems is a dramatic story in itself, and the swinging rhythm carries the reader on until he finds that he cannot put the book down before he has passed from No. 4 to No. 240 Jericho Street."—*The Westminster Gazette*.

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EARL SIMON

A TRILOGY

BY

WALLACE B. NICHOLS



LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS LTD.
ST. MARTIN'S STREET

1922

HOME AND I

WILLIAM BRENDON & SON, LTD.

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN the following trilogy historical events have been utilised to give actuality to the setting, but they have been considered as flexible material, and the plays are put forward as drama rather than as history.

For instance, the action of *Earl Simon* has been compressed out of all truth to actual facts, necessitating the elimination of Simon de Montfort's grown-up sons. And in *Viterbo* the meeting at Montargis between Edward I and Llewellyn—together with the appearance of the latter in the character of a messenger in the Greek manner—is entirely fictitious, but dramatically and poetically the situation is profitably heightened and the liberty with history thereby justified. I am also perfectly aware that Magna Carta was probably sealed only and not signed, but as its signing is part of our national apocrypha I have not scrupled to be inaccurate. Otherwise the main happenings throughout the whole trilogy are correctly presented, the liberties taken being only such as are required to knit up the action, or enhance the dramatic values, or illustrate the underlying idea.

Shelter against the various objections to such departures from historical truth might be taken behind the authoritative examples of Shakespeare, Goethe, Æschylus, Corneille, Scott and others too numerous to mention, but the theory of poetry is less insistent to a poet than its practice, and it is perhaps better for me to take shelter behind my own instinct which, rightly or wrongly, prompted me to project my theme in the manner I have, irrespective of sanction whether Aristotelian or other.

Runnymede, *Earl Simon* and *Viterbo* do not form a trilogy upon the Greek model; they are not, so to speak, sequels in action but sequences in idea. The Barons wrested the Great Charter from King John to gain their own selfish ends, not from humanitarian ideals, and Langton stood alone—or stands alone in my play—as the political seer, his coadjutors not understanding his motives, just as Simon de Montfort's followers did not understand his, and as even his own sons did not, since they could stoop to a common

revenge for his death, a revenge so pitifully alien to the spirit of their great father.

If this sequence of idea seems to emphasise the uselessness of effort in the wheel of time, and to be downward rather than upward, perhaps the final sonnet may be taken as evidence to the contrary, though a greater evidence is at hand in the course of history, in that growth of the liberty of the subject which was first promulgated, and has been best exemplified, in England and among Englishmen.

W. B. N.

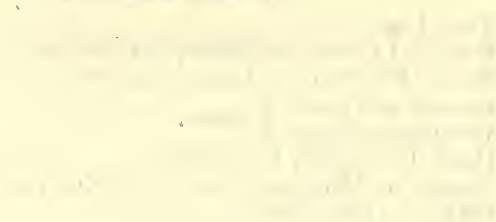
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TO
ARTHUR HUTCHINSON

WITHIN the tragic forge of the useless years
Two anvils gleam amid the furnace-glare,
And two smiths labour in the throbbing air,
Fraternal hammerers, fraternal seers.
One dreams of the earth and the other of the spheres ;
One at his apron has a measuring-square,
But the other has the laurel in his hair,
And his pure eyes are desolate with tears.
One is the chronicler, and curbs his skill
From myth or fantasy—lilies embossed,
Lotos, or nymphs, or dinted stars arow.
But the other is the poet, and shapes at will
His ore : from the anvil thyrsus-sparks are tossed,
And life's hot metal sings beneath his blow.

RUNNYMEDE



CHARACTERS

KING JOHN.

STEPHEN LANGTON, Archbishop of Canterbury.

ROBERT FITZ-WALTER, *Leader of the Barons.*

EUSTACE DE VESCI } *Barons.*

WILLIAM DE BRAOSE }

OTHER BARONS AND ECCLESIASTICS.

SAUVERY DE MAULEONE, *Leader of the King's mercenaries.*

BENÊT, *the King's jester.*

RUNNYMEDE

SCENE : *The Meadow of Runnymede, June 15th, 1215.*

A pavilion has been pitched, and within it are a table, with the Charter and writing materials upon it, and a seat for the King. The River Thames can be seen flowing past the end of the meadow.

LANGTON, FITZ-WALTER *and their colleagues are assembled, the Ecclesiastics in full vestments and the Barons in mail.*

LANGTON. Sons, warriors of God and Holy Church,
Here gathered in indomitable arms
To build a steadfast roof above our heads
And lay a solid pavement for our feet,
The Holy Wisdom of the Holy Ghost
Establish you in Faith, and Works, and Power ;
Direct and bless your hopes ; and seal as God's,
Yea, with the benediction of a full,
A bristling harvest in your waggons stalled,
This golden enterprise !

FITZ-WALTER. The King shall sign !

DE BRAOSE. The King shall stoop his helm !

FITZ-WALTER. The King shall pay
His long-due debt to me !

DE VESCI. And mine to me !

(The Barons murmur in vehement acquiescence.)

LANGTON. Oh, if 'tis hands unspiritual that wrest
The fire from Heaven, what hands shall foster it
Upon Earth's altars through the centuries long
That are to come, the years in Liberty's womb
Which shall be born with blood and terrible throes,
O God, what hands, what hands ?

FITZ-WALTER. The King shall sign,
Or I will kill him !

LANGTON. Nay, you are in arms
Not for your personal vengeance on John,
But for the general weal against the King
In the office of a king.

FITZ-WALTER.

Nevertheless

Our vengeance find here a potent voice,
Archbishop Langton, in our naked swords.

DE VESCI. Thou sayest ! And when my weapon flashes out
Presently in his chalking face, its point
Shall spell with whizzing pothooks in the air
De Vesci's wife's still honourable name :
And ' Margery ! Margery ! ' shall it fiercely hiss,
Until the sound of ' Margery ' brand his ears
With voluble fire !

LANGTON.

My lord—

DE VESCI.

Thou knowest not,

O wise and continent priest, the pulse and breath
Of wedlock-passion. Deep and absolute
The love wherewith I burn for my fair wife,
As deep and absolute as ever Saint
Burned with for Christ ! And comes this John
d'Anjou—

The Devil scald his pupils !—and sees my wife,
And straight his marrow smokes in his hot bones !
One night my ring at supper he admires ;
Must have it from my hand to get it matched
For his own wearing ; sends me with the day
Upon an embassy south, the ring up north
Swift to my wife and purported from me,
Bidding her to the court. I had a friend—
To have a friend is to believe in God,
Langton !—who brought me word, and I pulled rein
And turned, and rode not south but north—in time !

FITZ-WALTER. Your fortune shows me thrice unfortunate.
Ah, Eustace !

DE VESCI. You are shaken, my good lord !

FITZ-WALTER. To hold within my arms that pretty babe—
A bell of dew upon a rose at dawn !—

Her babe, my grandchild, one to prop my years,
And know it, while it crows up in my face,
A bastard, with its laughing eyes the King's !
And she, the mother, poisoned by that King !

A BARON. Poisoned ? The King ?

FITZ-WALTER. Aye, in an Easter gift,
An egg that, hatched, gave forth a subtle death.
Upon Ascension Day I found her dead.

LANGTON. Forbear, Fitz-Walter, your deep, intimate grief,
Albeit it nerves with iron your public will
Here in our cause expressed.

FITZ-WALTER. Archbishop, so ;
But the dull apprehension and heavy heart
And that blood-moth Despair when desolate age
Has seen its dear hopes toppled—not one by one,
But, like the walls of Jericho, at a trump !

A BARON. This is too arrogant an emphasis.

FITZ-WALTER. Have you a daughter? No, you cannot have.

THE BARON. Why cannot? For I have.

FITZ-WALTER. No, no, I think not.
You have a girl who dwells within your house,
Who at your table eats, and who has hair
To match the night and eyes to match the day,
But not a daughter.

THE BARON. Yes, a daughter, too.

FITZ-WALTER. Is she ungrateful, then? Would leave you?
Run

To the first flatterer's lure? Turn whore?

LANGTON. My lord,
Our common business waits.

FITZ-WALTER. You do not know :
A slim, light, blossomy, stirring thing she was,
As holy a burden in her swaddling days
As now, in his, her—bastard !

DE BRAOSE. I had a wife,
And two sweet, joyous daughters ; and the three
At Windsor, in a dungeon, died—from lack
Of bread and plenteousness of royal lust.
And I was fighting the King's wars in France !
Now, for God's sake, let us no more of this,
Lest we grow blind with wrath, and merciful
From very hate, and kill him. Death is one pang,
Humiliation, twenty !

LANGTON. De Braose

Counsels you well : be there of this no more !
Hark ! By those distant shouts—folk are like moths,
Drawn to bewraving glitter !—comes the King.
Here stand ye steadfast now for Liberty,
That all the unborn that ever England bear
Shall bless you and uplift a vast Amen
Unto this bridling of a tyrant's mouth.

(The noise of shouting grows nearer and nearer.)

FITZ-WALTER. We shall not fail this hour of Providence
So thou uphold us with thy crozier.

LANGTON. Son,

Crozier and sceptre have a turn to play
Upon this mead as shall not die with night,
Nor sleep in darkness, nor yet fade at morn.
Have thou thereof no fear, my son !

*(The royal barge draws up at the end of the meadow,
KING JOHN lands, and the shouting dies away as he
passes up the sward out of sight of the populace on
the river banks. The barge glides on.)*

DE BRAOSE. The King
Has left his barge.

DE VESCI. Lack-land, Lack-grace, Lack-God !
Adulterous anointed of the—Devil !

*(The KING, attended by SAUVERY DE MAULEONE, and
followed by BENÊT, makes his way towards them.
JOHN is magnificent in royal robes ; DE MAULEONE
is in mail. The Barons receive the King in silence,
and he uneasily affects a measure of jovial cordiality.
BENÊT seats himself cross-legged beside the King.)*

KING JOHN. Ye are as welcome to my royal heart
As to your loyal hearts, I trust, am I.
Beshrew me, sirs, this is a pleasant spot—
This meadow to the river rippling down.
I could dwell here a summer with a lute,
And be the shepherd to a flock of dreams.
But heavier cares, or heavier shepherding,
Employ our leisure now, as witnesses
Your great assemblage, Barons of my realm.

LANGTON. Pleases your grace to sit and hear our cause ?

KING JOHN. Must we with cause and clause waste all the day

From sunrise unto sunset? By God's teeth,
Is not this flame of June a clarion-note
To set our bosoms throbbing with the joy
Of summer? Is it to be caws and claws
Before I have smelled the sweetness of the air?

LANGTON. There is indeed a sweetness in this air,
And from the river blows a lyric wind.

KING JOHN. Is yon a wild-rose peeping from that bush?

LANGTON. A wild-rose, true, my lord.

KING JOHN (*to BENÊT*). Go, gather it,
And bring it to me.

BENÊT. 'Tis not oft your grace
Commits deflowering to a deputy.

KING JOHN. What, must I have thee whipped again?

BENÊT (*returning*). My lord,
'Tis fitter to be whipped in cap and bells
Than crown and ermine.

(*He presents the rose to the KING.*)

Have a care, a thorn

Is left upon the stem!

KING JOHN. Get thee to heel!

(*BENÊT seats himself as before.*)

FITZ-WALTER (*impatiently*). Your highness . . .

KING JOHN. Look, Fitz-Walter, on this rose:

See how its petals fold upon its heart
In nipped convolution exquisite,
Harmonious, lovely and inseparable!
So should his barons fold about their king.

FITZ-WALTER. The rose is blown, my lord!

BENÊT. Mark, King!

DE MAULEONE. Peace, cur!

And shall not these dogs, too, my lord, cry peace?

FITZ-WALTER. 'Mauleone the Bloody!'—

DE MAULEONE. Bloody indeed to traitors!

FITZ-WALTER (*drawing his sword*). Then bloodily go!

KING JOHN. Fitz-Walter!

FITZ-WALTER (*turning to him fiercely*). Rat of Hell!

KING JOHN (*to the ARCHBISHOP, hoarsely, dropping the rose*).
O Canterbury, Canterbury, their eyes !
They burn upon me, dots of fiery steel !
Whichever way I look I see their eyes !
Good Canterbury, dost thou not see their eyes ?
(*He covers his face with his hands. The Barons survey him with contempt.*)

LANGTON (*sadly, to FITZ-WALTER*). Robert, didst thou not promise me ?

FITZ-WALTER (*sheathing his sword*). My lord,
I am ashamed.

BENËT. My lord, we are ashamed !

Clap us together in one prison, nuncle !

KING JOHN (*recovering his equanimity*). Beshrew me, but
a shaft of sunlight, sirs,

Came dancing in mine eyes ! Primate, unfold

Unto your King your utmost purposes.

DE VESCI. Thrust in !

DE BRAOSE. His shield is down !

LANGTON (*with solemnity*). You are the King.

Consider what it is to be a king :

It is to sheave up in your single self

The innumerable field that is your folk,

Until, yourself transcended, you are they

And they are you. In sight of God and man

: You stand for them : a mediator, a priest,

An advocate, a shepherd. And your crown

Is not of Heaven alone, but of your people ;

'Tis for their sake you wear it ; for their good ;

And in their service. For to be a king

Is to be more a servant than a master—

To be the servant, without rest or end,

Of justice and of righteousness. And who

Can be held guilty of unrighteousness

Or of injustice when he sees his prince,

His natural justiciary and exemplar,

Unrighteous and unjust ? So is the king

Responsible for his people unto God,

And for his godliness unto his people !

KING JOHN (*with malice*). Is this a council or a sermon ?

LANGTON.

Sire,

It is the voice of England.

BENÊT.

Nuncle, hear :

The voice of England but the hand of Esau !

KING JOHN. Are we not come to hear our England speak ?

Say on, my lord Archbishop.

LANGTON.

King of England,

You best know England's wrongs who do her wrong,

Else were the conscience but an owl at noon.

As well try numbering a maze of gnats

In some moist country dingle as the swarm

Of tyrannies that through your rapined realm .

Do sting and buzz abroad. This was laid home

Unto your ears, and from your ears by stealth

Went prodigal ! Your royal promises

Turned harlots, with their lips for every man,

Their truth and troth for none ! We are a folk

Who love not tyranny ; to kings we say,

' Rule us as doth become a king, or pass ! '

Sire, rule us as becomes you, and take oath

Henceforward to preserve our liberties,

As in this Charter is laid strictly down

For ever ! Please your grace to con its terms.

(*He presents the roll of the Great Charter to KING JOHN.*)

KING JOHN. God's teeth, had I the thunderbolt to wield !

FITZ-WALTER. And Sauvery de Mauleone knows well

His mercenaries are as one to five !

DE MAULEONE. By God, they shall be five to one, Fitz-

Walter,

When I again ride hither !

KING JOHN.

Peace, while I read !

BENÊT (*rising and peering over the KING's shoulder*).

The cat's in the trap,

The mouse run away ;

And my lady mayhap

Will be flown before day.

That is the ditty which the barber wrote

Ere that he took the concubine to wife

And went to Purgatory. Why, nuncle, what ?
Must not a man be sent to prison now
Without fair trial, and by his fellows, too ?
By Termagant, but thou must mend thy ways,
Good nuncle !

KING JOHN. God's sweat, what, you pestilent traitors ?
Should I grant this I were a shadow—nothing !
Now, by the adulterous womb that vomited God,
I will nor sign nor seal !

FITZ-WALTER. Both sign and seal
You shall !

THE BARONS (*their swords flashing in unison*). Sign ! Sign !
(*The KING looks hastily round the menacing circle, then
turns appealingly to SAUVERY DE MAULEONE.*)

KING JOHN. Sauvery, sauvez-moi !

DE MAULEONE. Que puis-je faire ? Attendez, et demain—

FITZ-WALTER. Sign, King !

LANGTON. In God's own witness and the Saints' !

KING JOHN. Hell shrivel you within its midmost fire !
(*With a scowl of impotent rage the KING goes into the
pavilion. The ARCHBISHOP and Ecclesiastics and
BARONS throng about him while the business of signing
and sealing is effected. BENÊT and SAUVERY DE
MAULEONE are left together.*)

BENÊT. *The mouse ran back
To laugh at the cat—
What think you of that ?
The cat in the trap cried 'Alack !'
The cat in the trap cried 'Mew !'
My lady cried 'Love ?' and flew !
Oh, what think you of that ?*

DE MAULEONE. Peace, half-wit knave !

BENÊT. Peace in the midst of strife ?
And you a mercenary slit-a-throat !

DE MAULEONE. You were whipped yesterday. The King
has risen.

KING JOHN. Christ's body, but this quill the imperial bird
Moulted atop the mountains sears my hand
That so a king has used it !

(*He stamps the quill underfoot.*)

By God's teeth,

I blush for eagles and for kings : the storm
Buffets the one, rebellion cuffs the other !
I can behold the eagle, loftily flown,
Struggling in some too vehement tide of wind,
Bursting his scornful heart—the king of space
Smit by an aery hazard ! But in a trice
A sweep of royal pinions bears him on,
Careening to the sun. And shall a king
Fare worse ? Kings have especial providence,
As eagles and as lions—but foxes, apes
And carrion-crows fall sick of mists at night,
Miasmas and the malady of girls !
Would that I were the Enemy, the Dread,
The subtle creeping Thing, the Pest, the Worm !
Trumpet your triumph ! But I yet shall bruise
The heads of you who wound me in the heel !
Go, get you hence ! Or is there more to sign,
And more to render up to traitors ? What,
Must I not make confession, Canterbury,
How that I stole green apples in my youth ?
Am I so cleanly quit of further quittance ?
God's teeth, tormentors, get you from me ! Go !

FITZ-WALTER. Archbishop, shall you follow ?

LANGTON.

I shall follow,

Robert.

(*The BARONS, with scant courtesy towards the KING, depart, and with them the Ecclesiastics. But, after a few paces, the ARCHBISHOP returns. JOHN is now seated again, and has grown pale and moody.*)

LANGTON (*tenderly*). My son, ah, Absalom, my son !

KING JOHN. What ! Prat'st thou to me still, old Caiaphas ?
Thou hast given me five-and-twenty over-kings !

LANGTON. I turned to bring thee comfort and my blessing.

KING JOHN. As little I need the first as rate the second,
Langton ! They tarry for you yonder.

LANGTON.

Sire,

God keep you !

(*The ARCHBISHOP goes.*)

KING JOHN (*to DE MAULEONE*). Go, prepare my escort.

Quick,

Good Sauvery.

DE MAULEONE. Seigneur, à vous servir

Je vais tout disposer.

(*He goes.*)

BENÊT. Well, nuncle, well,

Crusading still is left a gentleman !

You had a brother with a lion's heart.

KING JOHN. To be a king and nothing !

BENÊT. To be a fool

And nothing—more !

KING JOHN. A leprous hand, methinks,

Had not sown leprosy so thick abroad

As this hale hand dishonour.

BENÊT (*skipping about*). *The wind bloweth*

The pollen over the wall,

And no man knoweth

Where it will wander and fall.

There is nothing heard,

There is nothing seen ;

And the bill of a bird

Is a midwife, I ween !

KING JOHN.

Fool, my fool,

What murmurest thou ?

BENÊT. Saws in the breeze, wise saws

That will set tinder ablaze and burn the house

O'er empty heads.

KING JOHN. Will they burn thoughts away ?

Make the brain boil to vapour ? Good my son,

As well call in a priest to set a leg

With paternosters or ten rosaries told !

BENÊT. Why, so he may—a woman's.

KING JOHN. Talk we here

Of men, of men.

BENÊT. But that is no man's work,

To talk : for he should do, not chatter ; fight,

Not mouth and make mouths ; tear the script to rags
With taloned gauntlets, and not scrawl a'foot—
That way, pardie, he soon will crawl afoot,
And ride caparisoned no more.

KING JOHN. ' And ride——'

Say that again, say that again !

BENÊT. No, no.

Twice told is good as untold—with a jest.

KING JOHN. They have given me five-and-twenty over-kings!

I would there were a God in brazen Heaven,
That He might see and laugh ! We could stand up,
Defiant, imperial, proud, if it were God
Who mocked our fevers, some great adversary
Beyond the circle of a sweeping sword !

BENÊT. The barber with the striped and coloured pole
Will milk your veins as speedily, good nuncle,
As rustic Madge the cow. Fulk is the man
To bleed distemperatures in wives and kings !
Shall I go fetch him, pole and cup and all ?

KING JOHN. Fetch me a syrup sleepy as a rose
Of Languedoc ! Give me a dream to stay
My longing, as a sop a fasting monk's !
Oh, hide me from the light, I am athirst
For darkness, hungry for the cockshut-hour
Of lattices folded to, the candle quenched,
The fire put out ! I would I were a boy
And had my mother to my comfort.

BENÊT. Aye,

'Tis to the breasts of women that we turn
In the hour of weakness. Pah !

KING JOHN. To women's breasts—

And to the hearts of fools !

BENÊT. Am I a king ?

KING JOHN. A king ?

BENÊT. To be so flattered of a liar !

KING JOHN. Be thou a king, thou art fitted : cap and bells,
And motleyed shanks.

BENÊT. Even to a sword of lath.

(He draws it mock-heroically.)

KING JOHN (*stung*). Get thee behind me, saint of saints !
God's teeth,

I am an antic mime in cloth of gold
And gabardine all diapered with pearls,
Strutting to gaping loons in some inn-yard !
There, fall from me, like hope.

(*He loosens his mantle from his shoulders.*)

And thou, off, off !

Am I a king of Jews to be so—thorned ?

(*He takes the circlet from his brows and lets it slip to the ground.*)

Now am I treasured of humility,
As doth become the Archbishop's ' Absalom,'
His Benjamin, his shorn lamb ! Tell me, fool—

(*He pauses.*)

BENÊT. I am here still, nuncle.

KING JOHN. How in after years
Wilt thou report me ?

BENÊT. As a poor snail, drowned
In his own shell : he had left it in the dew
Beneath a dripping rose-bush and came back
And toppled in like ne'er-you-please !
(*The KING has sunk, grovelling, on the grass, and is half distract.*)

KING JOHN. Fetch Fulk !

I am not Plantagenet, but a very weed.
Fetch Fulk to drain me of my nettle-sap,
And pour ambition in a wooden cup
Till it o'erbrim oblivion ! Benêt, quick !
Am I to perish of a fulsome pulse,
An apoplexy of imperial thoughts ?
This is the cud of life that kings must chew !
I could eat grass and wallow !

BENÊT. Look, O Heaven !

A metamorphosis wonderful and rare :
I to a king, a king into a beast !
Dan Ovid was a prophet.

KING JOHN. Fire of grass
About mine ears ! A singing, flaming rush

Of awful whispers that will speak no word,
 Yet all the terrible words that are in speech
 Seem in them, crouching as behind a rock,
 Ready to spring ! A poppy at my lips—
 But with no breath of magic sleep, no warmth
 Of dreamy exhalation that prepares
 The soul for the swift appetites of worms !
 Is it a hell-flower bursting through earth's crust ?
 Or star-seed spilled down from a wandering orb,
 A bastard of the spheres ? Or is it flux
 Dropped from a seraph's foot some arrow of God
 Has fierily smitten for an impudent rape
 In Heaven's seraglio ? Or a ruby tear
 From the eye of Satan ?

BENÊT. Master, thou wert born,
 Not made, a poet ! Thou fanciest well ; but which ?
 I know not, I !

KING JOHN (*tensely*). None ! 'Tis the bubbling seal
 Upon a roll of parchment where a king
 His heritage signed away ; and lo, it turned,
 Aye, like the Egyptian waters, into blood !

BENÊT (*in mock ecstasy*). Or like Christ's wedding-water—
 into wine !

*(He stands watching the KING who is lying at full length,
 face downwards, on the sward, groaning in impotent
 rage. Meanwhile the royal barge has again drawn up
 at the end of the meadow, with SAUVERY DE MAULEONE,
 who lands. The people on the banks, seeing the KING's
 barge, raise a great shout.)*

DE MAULEONE (*advancing*). Quoi donc ? Quoi donc ?

BENÊT. This is a Mystery-play,
 A masque. Who is the writer, prithee ? Why,
 Doth it lack psaltery, dulcimer, sackbut, harp,
 To be the work of Daniel ? It is called
 ' Nebuchadnezzar, or, All Flesh is Grass ! '

*(Mercenary and Fool stand together, gazing cynically
 down upon the KING.)*

DE MAULEONE. C'est trop régner !

BENÊT.

I am the epilogue :

*A rat there lived in a mill-wheel old
Through summer's heat and winter's cold ;
A new Miller came and built a new leet,
And the wheel went round from beneath the rat's feet,
The water swirled in, and the tale is told !
(SAUVERY DE MAULEONE laughs harshly, and the shouting
of the people swells in volume.)*

1918.

EARL SIMON

CHARACTERS

KING HENRY THE THIRD.

PRINCE EDWARD, *his son*.

RICHARD, Earl of Cornwall, afterwards King of the Romans,
the King's brother.

CARDINAL OTTOBONI, *the Papal Legate*.

EDMUND RICH, Archbishop of Canterbury.

ROBERT GROSSETESTE, Bishop of Lincoln.

WALTER DE CANTILUPE, Bishop of Worcester.

WILLIAM DE VALENCE, Earl of Pembroke, *the King's half-brother*.

PETER, Count of Savoy, *the Queen's uncle*.

SIMON DE MONTFORT, Earl of Leicester.

GILBERT DE CLARE, Earl of Gloucester.

ROGER LE BIGOT, Earl of Norfolk.

HUMPHREY DE BOHUN, Earl of Hereford.

JOHN MANSEL, *an ecclesiastic, one of the King's ministers*.

ROGER BACON, *a Franciscan friar*.

ADAM MARSH, *also a Franciscan friar*.

SIR HENRY DE HASTINGS, *a knight in the service of Simon de Montfort*.

SIR REGINALD DE WARRENNE, *the leader of a band of mercenaries*.

DENIS PYRAMUS, *a poet*.

NICHOLAS, *Simon de Montfort's barber and body-servant*.

A MILLER.

AN OLD PEASANT.

A YOUTH.

A PAGE.

ELEANOR OF PROVENCE, *the Queen*.

ELEANOR, *the King's sister*.

YVONNE D'ELORMIE, *a lady in attendance*.

ISABEAU PERTE, *also a lady in attendance*.

MARGOTH.

THE HOSTESS OF AN INN.

Barons, knights, men-at-arms, country folk, pages and attendants.

ACT I

In the Gardens of the Palace at Westminster.

On a terrace overlooking the Thames is a semi-circular seat of carved stone. Wide steps lead down from a central opening in the low wall of the terrace to an arched water-gate. It is an afternoon in early February, an afternoon of white snow and clear sunlight, deepening gradually to the crimson luminousness of a marvellous sunset. In the immense radiance the surrounding objects seem to exist impalpably, as in a dream. What can be seen of the gardens, stretching right and left of the terrace, is like a motionless forest of enormous and misshapen lilies of ice. Massive and solemn, the arch of the water-gate rears dazlingly above the dull river, casting a pale blue shadow as transparent as light.

CARDINAL OTTOBONI *is standing on the terrace, surveying the scene. His scarlet robes make a brilliant patch of colour in the surrounding whiteness. To him comes* DENIS PYRAMUS.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Most eminent Cardinal-Legate—

THE LEGATE.

How the snow

Gives Time and Silence a material life !

Look you, the stirless and encrusted trees,

The river's heavy tide, enmailed in ice . . .

But, good my son, your pardon ! Well ?

DENIS PYRAMUS.

The King

Prays but a moment of your patience more ;

He will come hither to you presently, sir,

For you to kiss his hand and take your leave.

THE LEGATE. I am bounden to his leisure. Are not you
The poet Denis Pyramus ?

DENIS PYRAMUS.

My lord,

So poor a man !

THE LEGATE.

I would we had earlier met,

Before my journey hence to France and Rome.

Some of your songs I have heard the minstrels sing :

They brought the blue light of my Tuscan skies
To this cold England and my colder heart.
My son, I thank you. Do you oft, O poet,
Make sojourn here at court ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. I sing a space
For the Queen's pleasure, and I tarry a space
For love's sweet, bitter sake.

THE LEGATE. Sir, speak a while
As man to man.

DENIS PYRAMUS. My lord ?

THE LEGATE. Apollo's children,
Who trade not with the mean things of the world,
Can clearer see and sift. How does the court
Affect these foreign favourites of the King ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. The favourites of the King, sir, are the
court !

THE LEGATE. You are shrewd ! But the great nobles of
the realm ?

How do they bear themselves, seeing all the posts
Of power and business in the State leased out
To Savoyards and Frenchmen ? You should learn
Much intimate gossip, more than I who rove
On Holy Church's welfare north and south
And east and west, in no place tarrying long,
One, too, but only lately Legate here.

DENIS PYRAMUS. They are as horses that curvet and shy
But cannot throw their masters.

THE LEGATE. Spirited
And restless, ha ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Indeed, but moderately :
Their hate outsoars their courage—or their wits !

THE LEGATE. You are shrewder still ! Whom do they
hate the most ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. There is a trinity of them, Cardinal :
First, the Queen's uncle, Peter of Savoy,
On whom the King but lately has bestowed
The manor of Richmond and the castles of Lewes,
Hastings and Pevensey.

THE LEGATE. The Queen has won

Some goodly English freeholds for her uncle !

Who is the second of your trinity, sir ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. The King's half-brother, William de Valence,

Now Earl of Pembroke.

THE LEGATE. And the third ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. A Frenchman—

Simon de Montfort, first made Earl of Leicester,

And then advanced to be the Lord High Steward.

THE LEGATE. I marvel at these English ! Sir, my thanks.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Will you be gone from England long, my lord ?

THE LEGATE. Two months, three months : not longer.

Sir, I hope

To number you among my pleasant friends

On my return. I love the Muses well,

And oftentimes I pass a morning hour

In modulating the hexameter.

DENIS PYRAMUS. I shall be bold to claim remembrance of you.

Go you to-night ?

THE LEGATE. To-night.

DENIS PYRAMUS. You . . . stay not, then,

To hear, yourself, the vows . . . that make a nun

Of the King's sister ?

THE LEGATE. 'Tis a sorrow to me

That I must delegate so happy an office

Unto the good Archbishop ; but the Pope

Is peremptory. I must forth at once.

Will you be present at the vowing ? Sir,

You are pale !

DENIS PYRAMUS. Pale ? Mockery of our faces ! Pale—

And all my soul a sea of crimson fire !

THE LEGATE. You are very moved !

DENIS PYRAMUS. A nun—she ! God . . . God . . . God . . .

THE LEGATE. Her holy promise, made to Edmund Rich

In that first chastening hour of widowhood . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS. A widow with her wifehood all to glean !

The old Earl of Pembroke was a father to her

More than a husband ; aye, past eighty, a father.
'Twas but a ritual and a ring between them.
She loved him as a daughter ; 'twas the vow
Of a warm-hearted child—a gush of feeling
For which her beauty and unenkindled youth
Must moulder away now, unembalmed of kisses . . .

THE LEGATE (*directly*). You love her ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Good my lord, you are a priest,
And this white terrace by the grey, deep Thames
Is your confessional.

THE LEGATE (*moved*). My son, my son . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS (*with a wave of the hand towards the gardens*).
To snood a rosebud in eternal snow !
I should have seen her day by day at court ;
She would have listened to my songs and praised them—
Unknowing they were every one for her.
So had I been a little happy. Now—
Not even my songs will reach her !

THE LEGATE. Peace—the King !

DENIS PYRAMUS. And she ! To immure that face, that
perilous body . . .

(*From another part of the gardens comes KING HENRY
THE THIRD, accompanied by the QUEEN, PRINCESS
ELEANOR, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, ROBERT
GROSSETESTE, PETER OF SAVOY, WILLIAM DE VALENCE,
JOHN MANSEL and the EARLS OF NORFOLK, HEREFORD
and GLOUCESTER.*)

KING HENRY. Lord Cardinal, I hear there is dispute
'Twixt thee and Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of
Lincoln.

THE LEGATE. A matter, sire—

GROSSETESTE. My gracious lord—

KING HENRY. Well, Grosseteste ?

GROSSETESTE. King, I appeal unto your justice here—

THE LEGATE. Son, I appeal in Holy Church's name,
For your considered judgment—

KING HENRY (*querulously*). By God's head,
Would Simon de Montfort were at hand to still
This clawing and chaffering ! Sirs, where lingers he ?

GROSSETESTE. Sire, hear me speak. The Cardinal-Legate
begs

His grace of Canterbury's voice to seat
His cousin, a poor scholar of Padua,
In the sub-abbot's stall at Westminster—

THE LEGATE. Aye, so : and whom I recommend to him
Not as a cousin but as Legate of Rome,
And caring for the spiritual weal
Of Westminster.

KING HENRY. A proper and righteous care.
Why does our father of Lincoln, then, dispute
His eminence's pastoral shepherding
Of Holy Church in England ?

GROSSETESTE. Is not, sire,
A revenue of seventy thousand marks,
Milked from full-uddered England every year
By foreign priests, enough ?—a revenue
More than the gathered revenues of your crown !

KING HENRY (*crossing himself*). It is for Holy Church, and
we were lost

Unto damnation without Holy Church.

GROSSETESTE. Sire, is it for our spiritual weal
That they who cannot speak our English tongue
Should minister to simple English souls
Throughout your realm ?

KING HENRY. 'Tis not the minister,
Good Grosseteste, but the Message that he brings.
Aye, aye, the Message !

GROSSETESTE. Is it well, my liege,
That some should draw their revenues, yet not once
Come oversea unto their benefices—
No, not an Easter visit ?

KING HENRY. But, my lord,
They may distribute those same revenues
Unto the poor and sick in Italy.
The poor are still Christ's flock in Italy
As here in England.

CANTERBURY. Truly said, my son,
And godlily said.

GROSSETESTE.

O royal Plantagenet,

Be as the leopard on your surcoat there,
And rend these wolves that bay about your folk.
Be king in your own kingdom, and thrust out
These hirelings ; make our land one castle, safe,
As the Lord God provided, with our moat
Of sea that never an enemy dare cross—
Save these friend-foes who overcreep our walls,
Or worm beneath : these beggarly hierarchs,
These steppers into honester people's shoes—

THE LEGATE. King Henry, can the Legate of the Pope
Hear this in silence ?

KING HENRY.

Cardinal, no ; nor I.

Lincoln, retire unto your bishopric
Until we summon you to our court again.
And, Canterbury, we charge you give your voice
Unto the cousin of his eminence !

GROSSETESTE. I go, sire.

*(He turns to go. As he passes the EARL OF GLOUCESTER
he addresses him quietly.)*

England cries out for a man.

(He goes slowly away down the gardens.)

THE LEGATE. I thank your highness. *(To the QUEEN)*

Madam, 'tis farewell

Till, with your roses of Provence, and Spring,
I come again.

THE QUEEN. And you will not forget

My roses when you come ?

THE LEGATE.

If Spring play true,

No, madam. *(To ELEANOR)* Lady, I rejoice to think
The white rose of your gentle widowhood
Will bloom the whiter in a nunnery's garden
By my return. Daughter, you have my prayers.
Farewell, sire.

KING HENRY.

First your blessing, Cardinal.

*(The LEGATE blesses the KING who crosses himself, and,
muttering prayers, is oblivious to the CARDINAL's
departure.)*

CANTERBURY. I will attend your eminence to the gates.
THE LEGATE (*to* DENIS PYRAMUS). My son, thine arm. This
Simon de Montfort . . . tell me . . .

(*They go.*)

WILLIAM DE VALENCE (*to* PETER OF SAVOY). These priests—
PETER OF SAVOY. Hush, de Valence !

DE VALENCE. My royal half-brother
Hears not a word, good Peter, his thin lips
And thin soul paternostering.

PETER OF SAVOY. Well ?

DE VALENCE. These priests
Are a brave pageant : scarlet, crimson and white ;
But oft I think their rich and sweeping robes
Would be less easily and blandly worn
Were they, against their ordination, wived.

PETER OF SAVOY. How so ?

DE VALENCE. They would remember, sudden-sharp,
When pompous in some great cathedral nave,
With acolytes and incense, how, last night,
As severally they blew their candles out,
The several words of women severally
Had whittled them to shavings !

KING HENRY. De Valence—

DE VALENCE. Beau sire ?

KING HENRY. The castle of Hertford to my hands
Has lapsed. 'Tis thine, Sir Brother.

DE VALENCE (*kissing the KING's hand*). Good my liege,
I have no endeavours else than to repay,
In measure with my birth, your highness' largess
By my continual love and faithfulest duty.

GLOUCESTER. Um ! Frenchman !

THE QUEEN. Uncle, with my Henry's leave
I am fain to play the enchantress of thine ear,
Delivering tidings that betide thee good.

PETER OF SAVOY. No greater good, my fair and royal
niece,
Can ever here befall me than thy love.

THE QUEEN. On every sack of wool that is exported
A goat is to be thine.

PETER OF SAVOY (*beside himself with avaricious joy*). My Queen ! My King !

This is your love in sooth ! In sooth ! Your hands—
Both of you both your hands—for me to kiss !

GLOUCESTER. Um ! Savoyard !

HEREFORD. We shall be beggars soon,
Barons and peers of England beggars all,
Pleaders for alms to these high-mightinesses !

GLOUCESTER (*pointing down the gardens*). Here yet another
of these foreigners—

Simon de Montfort, lately out of France,
Now Earl of Leicester !

HEREFORD. A sennight back increased
To be the Lord High Steward.

NORFOLK. What, Hereford, what ?
Is this true, Gloucester ?

GLOUCESTER. Norfolk, it is true.

NORFOLK. By God, can this be borne ?

(SIMON DE MONTFORT *approaches, reading from a vellum roll.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. This is profound :
'One individual is worth the world.'

NORFOLK. Will it please my Lord High Steward to vouch-
safe

His judgment in the relative precedence
'Twixt an old earldom and new stewardship ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*handing his vellum scrip to a page*).

We read in Christendom's infallible Book
Both of an unjust steward and unjust lord,
A judge, so that, it seems, before High God,
A lord and steward may equally be unjust :
So neither one, my lord, takes precedence.

(*The three Barons murmur against him.*)

KING HENRY. Who are these murmurers against my
friend ?

Who hates my friend hates me. Most welcome, Simon !
I was about to send my nimblest page
To find thee—with some pretty nun, belike !

What says my sister to her sisterhood?

Nay, God assoil me of such wittiness !

Hast seen my brother Richard?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Good my liege,

I met the Earl of Cornwall by the dial ;

There was a scrivener with whom he talked.

KING HENRY. Having his moneys in neat long-hand writ,

To show me, out of brotherly confidence,

He is as fat in good gold crowns as paunch,

And I as lean as Friday. Brotherly!

But, madam, look ! Upon the white snows burns

The sunset, and it draws to supper-time.

Come, then, my Queen. Sister, wilt sup with us?

ELEANOR. I am fain, my lord, to stay and meditate.

THE QUEEN. A white nun meditating on her veil !

KING HENRY. My sister with those sisters, her white thoughts,

Singing their starry hymns as hand in hand

They pace Eternity !

(He kisses her.)

But come, fair wife.

Attend us, lords.

THE QUEEN. Your brother—by the dial?

KING HENRY. Let Richard of Cornwall follow when he please !

(The KING and QUEEN, followed by the nobles, depart.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT, unmarked by ELEANOR, has remained, and stands watching her. Suddenly he speaks.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Beloved—

ELEANOR. Oh, beshrew me, but thy voice

Has clapped upon my heart and stilled it !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Witch,

I thought thou hadst no heart.

ELEANOR. What ! Heartless ? I ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I took thy heart to be a fled-from home, !

A dweller in another place—even here
Where thou dost lean, my sweet.

ELEANOR. Thou art foolish-wise,
And yet a very man. We women—smile.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I have thee tightly by these tender wrists.

ELEANOR. Who taught thee so much foolishness of love,
Stern warrior?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Thou, and thou, and only thou !
But what ? Am I so stern to thy sweet self
That my romaunt is foolishness ?

ELEANOR. To me?

Ah, no. To thee? I would it were not! But—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My sweet?

ELEANOR. I fear me oft a little.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Fear?

What dost thou fear?

ELEANOR. That love, which is my all,
Is but thy something. Men do so forget
The lonely littlenesses of our life
That make of love a woman's every thing.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My everything is thou, and thou art
love.

Yea, even as God is love, whom I love best

In thee, God's gift and truest witness. Kiss me!

ELEANOR. What is it in my lips that moves thee so?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I am swept into their scent even as
a bee !

ELEANOR. Beloved, my hands meet behind thine head,
And in a kiss I whisper that I love.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Men have been blest before but
more blest none.

ELEANOR. Not to confess true love is to deny
Love's truth! O my strong mountain, my strong
Simon—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Give me no more a name—I am
thyself !

ELEANOR. And now it seems I cannot look at thee.
Oh, hold me close while yet the hour is here !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Each breath is but a moment
seeding down,

Spilling away from passion ! Swift, thy lips !

ELEANOR. Oh, take. O my beloved, take and take !

*(It has grown darker, and PRINCE RICHARD, EARL OF
CORNWALL, has come upon them unperceived.)*

CORNWALL. Leicester !

ELEANOR. Jesu !—my brother.

CORNWALL. I come prompt

Upon necessity, I think, Sir Earl !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My tongue is as my heart—honest
but quick.

Question me not too roundly.

CORNWALL. By Hell's gate,

What ? Cover a dunghill with a cope of silk ?

Nay, this shall out ! The sister of your King

No better than your wanton ! A vowed nun

Cheated from Christ to be your courtesan !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By the arm of St. James, no more,
Cornwall, no more !

(The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY returns.)

CANTERBURY. Why, why, my lords ! What moves in you
such heat ?

CORNWALL. Ask him ! Ask her !

(He runs heavily down the gardens, shouting.)

Henry ! Henry ! King Henry !

CANTERBURY. Oh, what a bushel here of good spilled grain

When two such gentlemen are drawn to strife !

What is it, daughter ? Well, thy nunnery

Will see thee safe ere long from such sad broils.

Take comfort.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Nunnery ! Faugh !

CANTERBURY. Son ! Son ! Her vows . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Vows ! Nunnery ! Seed-blow—
pah !

ELEANOR. O my good lord,

Forgive me !

CANTERBURY. Daughter, what has chanced ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Thou'lt know

Ere this wild minute dies of leprosy !

(With clamour and with attendants bearing torches comes back the EARL OF CORNWALL, and in his company are the EARLS OF GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD and NORFOLK.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Well, gentlemen, are ye come to bait a bear ?

CORNWALL. See them, my lords ! Seducer and seduced !

The traitor and the sister of his King !

HEREFORD. French upstart !

NORFOLK. Lord High Steward—the Parable,
Christ's Parable—Lord False Steward !

GLOUCESTER *(drawing his sword)*. We will send

The King of Hell, with English compliments,

A Lord High Steward to his devilship !

(The others also draw their swords and menace DE MONTFORT, who stands disdainfully but tense with rage.)

ELEANOR. My lords—my brother—

CANTERBURY.

Good my lords, my lords !

Oh, what a fray is here !

(KING HENRY comes with JOHN MANSEL.)

KING HENRY.

Put up your steel !

(They murmur rebelliously.)

Gloucester, obey your King !

GLOUCESTER *(sheathing his sword with an ill grace)*. My

lord !—well, in ;

But rust not !

(The others sheathe their weapons one after another with a contemptuous snick.)

CORNWALL.

Sire—

KING HENRY.

I know the matter. Peace !

ELEANOR. My falcon, swoop thy swiftest now !

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

I shall !

It is your English custom, sirs, it seems,

To set a limitation upon love

Of that much honesty as holds the head

Above your gaping angers. By the Rood, -
But I could make you dance with my bright sword—
Saving this presence—for a theme is mine
Whereto to play you in that rhetoric
As not the Paladin Roland, of the Song,
Had for his argument. By the arm of St. James,
You troop of hawks, it is for no man born,
Or peer or prince or beggar of the stews,
To bid me pray the impertinence of his leave
Ere I may kiss—my wife !

CORNWALL. What ! With the blood
Of England mated ? King !

ELEANOR. The King knew all.

HEREFORD (*fiercely*). Deny it, my liege, and we will execute Your justice straightway on that traitor there!

CORNWALL. It was her dowry that he coveted.
Mark me !

ELEANOR. The King knew all !

CORNWALL. By Judas, no !

NORFOLK. We barons curbed your father, sire, a king :
Shall we not curb this subject ?

KING HENRY. 'Twas secret done.

I was, in very sooth, approached thereto,
But, knowing such espousal might not be
Without concurrence of my baronage
And the Great Council, I refused consent.
'Twas secret done.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O heart of wax !

ELEANOR. My liege,

I must be, then, afflicted with strange dreams,
And it was manifestly in one of such
That in your privy chapel privily
You gave me to my husband.

KING HENRY (*plucking MANSEL by the sleeve*). What is to do?

JOHN MANSEL. My lord, bow to the storm—but as a King,
One loving tempest from affinity.

KING HENRY. But—

JOHN MANSEL. Banishment !

KING HENRY. My lords, blow cool, blow cool !

'Tis my prerogative to smite or spare.

NORFOLK. Then smite !

KING HENRY. Norfolk, I shall both smite and spare—

How close to Godhood, mark you, kinghood is !

Sister, we banish you to Kenilworth ;

And, Earl of Leicester, you beyond the seas.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Beyond the seas—my wife to
Kenilworth !

KING HENRY. Look to yourself ! Begone ! Come, gentlemen !

*(He goes, with his companions. The ARCHBISHOP lingers
a moment.)*

CANTERBURY *(to ELEANOR)*. Thy vows ! Beyond my peace
am I distressed,

And for thy soul, as for one lost, henceforth

Will in my private oratory pray !

*(He goes. ELEANOR and SIMON DE MONTFORT are left
alone.)*

SIMON DE MONTFORT. As many leagues of separation,
sweet,

As stars looked down on us when first we kissed !

ELEANOR. Be thou but as thy name, 'strong mountain,'
Simon,

And the same stars shall see us kiss again.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Trouble, sweet wife, is nowhere in
the world,

Thou loving me.

ELEANOR. And so I do, I do,

Dear heart !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Yet trouble's shadow troubles me . . .

O Eleanor, what shall our hungry arms

Do while embraces rust ? Thus could I tire

Exile with waiting me, till, in despair,

She set her term at nought, and, ere her time,

Die of the very famine of me ! Sweet,

Be prodigal of this sad moment's joy

Lest we be scanted of good memories

These months to come.

ELEANOR (*clinging to him*). O Simon . . . Simon . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Hush !

God keep thee, my most dear !

ELEANOR. Swift, kiss me, Simon,

And let me go, lest I no more remember

My courage is Plantagenet !

(*They embrace and she tears herself away. DE MONTFORT stands looking after her as she goes down the gardens. The KING's minstrels can be heard beginning to sing in the distance. With a sigh he turns away when she is out of sight, and finds the LEGATE beside him.*)

THE LEGATE. Sir, your pardon :

Do not I speak unto the Lord High Steward,

Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sir,

And if you do ?

THE LEGATE. I am Cardinal Ottoboni,
The Papal-Legate. Bound for France to-night,
I have thus made bold to seek me your acquaintance
Ere setting forth.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You find me but the steward
Of barren honours, Cardinal.

THE LEGATE. Nay, my lord,
You hold, I know, great power in England here,
A power which should be bountifully spent
For Holy Church our Mother.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sir, in England ?

Alas, I, too, set forth to-night for France.

THE LEGATE. Indeed ? It would, my lord, rejoice me
much

To have your company across the Straits.

You go to Paris, doubtless, for the King ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I go to exile, Cardinal, from the
King.

THE LEGATE. My lord of Leicester, this is grievous news.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Why, not so grievous as importu-
nate ;

I shall solicit you, Legate, as we sail.

THE LEGATE. All my good offices with my friend King
Henry
Shall be employed for you. Some rubble of words,
No doubt, and easily smoothed. Trust it to me ;
My influence all is yours.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Not with the King ;
The Pope.

THE LEGATE. The Pope ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. A dispensation, Legate.

THE LEGATE. I pray your confidence, my lord. I fear
'Tis some grave matter.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Grave in gravest truth :
I am like to lose my wife for it, Cardinal.

(He whispers in the LEGATE's ear.)

THE LEGATE. I am verily astound ! King Henry's sister—
In secret nuptials !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Nay, the King was there.

THE LEGATE. Is she not under certain vows, my lord ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Did not I speak, sir, of a dispensa-
tion ?

I know that they will cry her vows for ever
Into my face, and with them smite me low—
Unless I move betimes.

THE LEGATE. But how may I,
A priest and Legate, countenance broken vows ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I ask not so much of your eminence.
I but entreat your influence with the Pope
That those untempered vows may be dissolved.

THE LEGATE. It is God's grace, working within the soul,
That prompts the vows of mortals. Let not man
Deal so disastrously with heavenly peace
And spiritual aspiration.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Cardinal,
Break up that priestly ice about your heart
And let the drowning soul of you come through !
A young girl wrought upon by death's vast awe,
And lonely, with the gnarled, kind hand of Pem-
broke

Gone from her virginal hair—are such green vows
As broke then from her heart that knew not life
To mew her up until the Day of Doom?

THE LEGATE. Of her freewill, my lord, she took those
vows!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sir, if there come a babe, as come
there may!

God is Himself a father, so you teach:

Sir, for the love of God our Father, hear me!

(There is no reply.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O Ottoboni, Ottoboni, God
Of a great surety thumb'd one ventage in you
Whose subtle governance will effect a music!
Is there no hour of all your youth's swift hours
That steals at cock-shut to your memory
When looking deep into a fire of logs—
Some hour of soft-hued springtime, with the mist
Golden among the woods, and on the streams
The dancing light, and in your heart an echo
Of some wild song you never heard voice sing
And yet you hear it singing through your soul?

THE LEGATE *(after a pause)*. There was a brown-haired
girl at Fiesole

Who sang upon the hills among the pines
Beneath the morning-star and evening-star.
It was the plague that took her.

*(He is silent for a moment, then he continues with a smile,
but in a low voice.)*

Good my lord,
You will sit high again at great men's feasts.
Then, 'twixt the lampreys and the toasted sop,
I pray you dwell a little in your thoughts—
Though set beside that lady whom you love—
On an old man who was your advocate
Once in a pressing business. Think of him
Not as the courtly and far-scheming Legate
But as a priest who never was a father
Yet had a fatherly heart, and who remembered—

With dropping tears remembered once at sunset—

One hour of all the swift hours of his youth.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My face I bow, and for a dead girl's
soul

I pray.

THE LEGATE. Give me your arm ; I scarce can see.

(They go together down the gardens.)

ACT II

SCENE I : *An Inn-Yard in Kent.*

It is a square, walled space, cobbled. Facing the spectator is the inn, an example of late Norman domestic architecture that has defied successfully the winds and rains of a hundred and fifty years. A short flight of lateral stone steps leads up to the round-arched door, on either side of which is a round-arched window. At the bottom of the steps is a wooden bench. In the wall to the spectator's left is the entrance into the yard from the highway, a mere break in the flint wall. In the centre of the yard is a stone horse-trough. Diagonally to the inn proper, and forming the wall opposite the entrance to the yard, are the stables and the outhouses.

It is a bright day in early autumn. Seated on the bench is ROGER BACON, resting and talking to the HOSTESS of the inn.

THE HOSTESS. My goodman, friar, has been abed two weeks ;

The gout is mortal given to striking in.

ROGER BACON. Let him eschew all ale and drink much water.

THE HOSTESS. Then 'tis a case of Abraham's bosom ! Well,
The Lord be praised that I can bury my third
Better nor what I did my first and second !

The world is a good place for them as thrive.

ROGER BACON. Here is a silver penny for the dish
Of herbs I ate.

THE HOSTESS. A body must get moneys
Against the burying-time, or they would lay us
In garden-holes as they lay dogs and cats,
Else I would give a holy man his mess
Of pottage for the love of sacred Mary
And no more said. And God knows that the house
Is full of care, the goodman 'twixt his sheets
And the place thronged with royal quality
Upon the sudden ; it gives a reverent woman,

One that has kept herself god-fearing honest,
No time to tell her beads or count her scores,
With all the doorpost white with chalk as 'tis,
And carriers' elbows sly at rubbing out.

ROGER BACON. What royal quality have you within ?

THE HOSTESS. Why, hoity-toity, all folk know, good friar,
That the King's sister honours my poor roof
At bed and board.

ROGER BACON. The sister of the King ?
Wife to the banished Simon de Montfort, Earl
Of Leicester ?

THE HOSTESS. Aye, she and her pretty babe.
You live not in the world !—he is no more
A banished man. The King has sent for him
And pardoned all his 'foretime naughtiness,
Whate'er it was. He has been in foreign wars,
But now is home and riding from the coast.
She waits him in my walls this blessed day—
And my goodman abed and twinged ! She came
As ordinary as you please, last night,
And with so scant a train of maids and men
A little copse would hide them—yea, and she
So great a lady and so civil spoken.

*(The sound of the jingling of bits and the trotting of
horses gathers and grows nearer along the highway.)*

THE HOSTESS. A troop of mercenaries, like as not ;
The murderous thieves !

ROGER BACON. Captains and men, thieves all :
They are pollution in the realm.

THE HOSTESS (*sententiously*). Aye, friar,
And fornication, too !

A VOICE WITHOUT. Halt !

THE HOSTESS. Heaven now help us !
That voice ! It is de Warenne and his brood.

THE VOICE. The house is yours ; I say it.

*(SIR REGINALD DE WARENNE and his mercenaries press
into the inn-yard, till it is filled with a surging,
clamorous crowd of ribald men-at-arms.)*

VARIOUS MERCENARIES (*practically simultaneously*). Drink,
ho ! Drink !

And Christian measure, look you—or we fire
The thatch. Fetch out your best ! And any girls
You have within ! Aye, maids or no maids. Quick,
Thou old Iniquitess !

THE HOSTESS (*interpolating into the foregoing*). Good sirs,
this moment !

Peter, I say ! Be patient, sirs ! This moment !

Peter ! You shall be satisfied. Ho, Peter !

(PETER comes out of the inn.)

Serve these good gentlemen quickly, Peter, quickly !

A MERCENARY (*mimicking her treble*). Aye, quickly, Peter—
(*In his own natural bass.*)

Or we slit your throat !

(*Some of their number go in with PETER and bring out
drink. The others dispose themselves about the yard,
singing and jesting.*)

THE HOSTESS (*to ROGER BACON*). I would this had not
happ'd for twenty crowns,

With the King's sister there within my doors,
And her first sojourn, too. I shall not have
My house a palace now ever again !

MERCENARIES. More, Peter, more ! Fill round !

DE WARRENNE (*grimly punning*). Bring out more mead,
You one-eyed Gany-mede !

MERCENARIES. Bring out a firkin,

Good Peter ! Bring two firkins out, d'ye hear,
You Gany-what-the-devil ? Nom de Dieu !
Du vin, hé !

THE HOSTESS. Not a penny, not a penny
For all the waste and trouble ; not a penny !
As well have poured my cellar in the horse-trough !
And her within ! 'Tis more nor I can bear.
She has ears to hear and eyes to see, I warrant.
There yet will be a riot, I know it, I—
When they cry out for wenches : Bet is black
And flashing, and will set them all by the ears.

Then swords will out and all the Devil's hurly—
And my goodman abed !

ROGER BACON (*rising*). Peace, woman, peace ;
I will get rid of them.

THE HOSTESS. You know them not,
Good friar ; but holy Mary be your speed
And heal your head when broken !

(*She covers her head with her apron and runs indoors.*)

ROGER BACON. Men-at-arms—

DE WARENNE (*with a grim laugh*). Mark us, and we will
teach you, cloistered loon,
How to live life !

ROGER BACON. I warrant me, Sir Knight,
However I may live, I have greater power
On life and living folk than thou.

DE WARENNE. I lack,
Dan Friar, the faith in priestly ordinance.

ROGER BACON. Thou dost not, then, believe in monkish
marvels ?

DE WARENNE. Marvels ? God's body, no !

ROGER BACON. Sir, pick me out
Thy most dependable and sturdy captain ;
Instruction with amusement shall be mingled
For thy behoof in these high matters, son.

DE WARENNE. Sgan'relle, stand forth. Now, shaveling !

ROGER BACON. Sir, this fellow—
Dost thou believe him empty of idle fancies ?

DE WARENNE. Sgan'relle ? By Thomas, he could meet the
Devil
And flick no wondering eyelid !

ROGER BACON. Watch and mark !
Sgan'relle, now look me deep in the eyes ; yea, so.

(*He takes SGAN'RELLE by the chin, looks him fixedly in
the eyes, then makes several rapid passes with his hand
before the man's face.*)

ROGER BACON. Listen, Sgan'relle. Thou wanderest through
a wood
In Normandy, a wood aswarm with bees ;

Thou stumblest o'er a lopped and rotting bough
Into a wild-bees' nest . . . a wild-bees' nest . . .
A wild-bees' nest . . .

(At first SGAN'RELLE has watched him anxiously and then has gazed before him as though in a trance. Suddenly he seems to crumple up, and falls limply to the ground, where he lies ; then, as if possessed, he goes through the motions of a man who is attacked by bees, rolling, writhing, screaming and clutching wildly at his head. The mercenaries, at first interested, gradually become superstitiously afraid and back against the wall, gaping and awestruck.)

DE WARENNE. Vile friar, enough of this !

(He draws his sword ; his men recover their courage and murmur angrily against ROGER BACON.)

DE WARENNE. Enough, I say, you devilish mountebank . . .

(As he threatens BACON with his weapon ELEANOR appears in the doorway of the inn. At the sight of the KING's sister DE WARENNE falls back, dumb and thunder-struck. BACON, with a smile, releases SGAN'RELLE from his trance. The man returns among his companions, bewildered and sheepish. The HOSTESS, nervously wringing her hands, has followed ELEANOR and can be seen behind her.)

ELEANOR. Whose men are you ? De Montfort's ? What, de Warenne !

DE WARENNE. Madam—

ELEANOR. I hoped 'twas the eagle ; 'tis the hawk.

Put up, Sir Knight ; know you not Roger Bacon ?

A WHISPER *(among the MERCENARIES)*. The wizard ! The magician !

DE WARENNE *(sheathing his sword)*. Roger Bacon !

ELEANOR. Draw off your men, de Warenne. I await

My husband the great Earl. I would not have
Black hawks to cry him home.

DE WARENNE. Out, men ; away !

Halt at the bridge. Away !

(The MERCENARIES go, and in a moment they can be heard riding off.)

ROGER BACON.

My humble thanks

Unto your highness !

ELEANOR.

Friar, my lord of Leicester,

Who holds you in his honourable esteem,

Will thank me for my little pains in this :

I pray you, tarry and greet him, riding in.

(With a bow of acquiescence ROGER BACON goes into the inn ; the HOSTESS, with a curtesy to ELEANOR, follows him.)

DE WARRENNE. This hazard of encounter unaspired
Disshrouds my star ! A long intent shall speak :
There is mine a diadem—of gold, and lit
With lozenged rubies—that your sire, King John,
Gave my dead mother years and years ago
And when he was but prince. It is my prayer
That, with my humble duty to your house
And reverence for yourself, you will accept
This faltering proffer of a royal gaud
That yet for such a princess seems but mean—
As, too, I feel it, for the heart that gives,
A heart its rubies mirror.

ELEANOR.

What ! In the hour

My husband from his battles gets him home ?

DE WARRENNE. 'Tis the eagle in me, and my pride to
soar

Audaciously ; and this it is that sweeps

A woman from her inmost self . . . in the end.

Should I laboriously woo you long

I should not win one thought ; but, daring thus,

You will not easily, I think, forget

This hour of all your life, nor, in it, me !

(YVONNE D'ELORMIE, carrying a baby's cloak richly embroidered with the royal arms of England, appears in the doorway, coming out of the inn.)

ELEANOR. Sir, go ! An eagle of a stronger plume
Wings hither, and has claws.

DE WARRENNE.

There is a King

To cut them, and a cutting-time in Surrey

Even as a nutting-time. I have broken at last
Into the tower of your eternal thoughts !

(*He goes. YVONNE comes forward, displaying the cloak to show her mistress. ELEANOR addresses her fiercely, disregarding the cloak completely. YVONNE is swept almost into a panic by her vehemence.*)

ELEANOR. This 'tis to be a mother and a wife—
To be a wanton in a libertine's dreams !
Aye, even a dream can soil us if it spatter.
Our womanhood is too white—a speck will smirch.
A speck ? The shadow of a flying mote !
If, as Christ says, the man who does but lust
After a woman commits adultery
Within his heart, who can protect a woman
From such an intimate shame ? It touches us all ;
We are none of us safe from the desire of men,
Their very glance attempts us in the street,
And as we pass we are fallen ! Though we turn nun,
Some man's remembrance can desire us still !
We are not secure in death even, nay, even there
A thought can dwell upon us and make us vile !
(*ISABEAU PERTE comes running impulsively out of the inn.*)

ISABEAU PERTE. What thinks your highness of the pretty
cloak ?

Is it not like a jewelled chasuble
On a young cardinal who loves a queen ?

ELEANOR. The cloak ? Oh, aye !—I had other thoughts in
heart.

(*They show her the cloak with much feminine ado.*)

ELEANOR. You have plied your needles well.

ISABEAU PERTE. The royal leopards
Of England make the bravest show, la !

ELEANOR (*mistress of herself again*). Sweetings,

A kiss on either cheek of each of you . . .

Now will he look a very prince !

YVONNE D'ELORMIE. A-ride

On a cock-horse from golden Samarkand

And peacocked Tartary . . .

ISABEAU PERTE. Give us leave, my lady,
To dress him in it—now.

ELEANOR. Why, yes, my chuck . . .

(ISABEAU runs back into the inn.)

YVONNE D'ELORMIE. Your highness—

ELEANOR. Yes, my red Yvonne ?

YVONNE D'ELORMIE. Is love

The more a mystery in the wooing-time

Or in the wedded-time ?

ELEANOR. Sweet, what a blush

Is the undersong to thy low melody !

YVONNE D'ELORMIE (*confusedly*). Nay—

ELEANOR. Tell me not it is the wind, Yvonne—

That were unworthy of thy knight-at-arms.

If he be worthy—and I doubt it not,

Henry de Hastings has Earl Simon's trust—

It were unworthy to dissemble love ;

That is, to me. I do not counsel, mark,

Thou shouldst not, sweet, dissemble it to him.

Like a beleaguered town whose hopeless pride

Stiffens in its defence till the last wall

Outfight its epic brethren, so, outbrave

A lover to the last, most at the last.

(*Gradually there has approached the sound of a nearing cavalcade, and SIMON DE MONTFORT enters from the highway into the inn-yard. Seeing his wife, he stops at the entrance, and listens, with a smile of joy upon his face.*)

ELEANOR. But entertain his spy within thine heart,

Lest he despairingly should raise the siege,

Which, nay, he will not when his spy reports

That truly 'tis the last, last wall stands now

Which, taken, wins the whole. But wooing-time

And wedded-time ? One is a flame, and the other

A fire !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Great heart ! Fire after flame !

My own !

ELEANOR (*with a great cry*). Simon !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*embracing her*). My wife, my sweet !
All my to-day's
And my to-morrow's joy ! Mistress Yvonne,
Henry de Hastings is beyond the wall . . .

(YVONNE *runs out from the yard*.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The swift, red Thisbe !

ELEANOR. O my dearest heart,
Exiles and battles are a twilight tale
We dream on and forget . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Now here let Time
Be packed to exile !

ELEANOR. Thou wilt have to fight me
Out of this keep, thy bosom : no way else,
Strong Captain, no way else !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My beautiful foe,
Fight thee ? I have enveloped thee about ;
I hold thee prisoner in my dungeoning arms.

(*With a laugh he kisses and releases her*.)

There, go ; thy love, sweet, is thy ransom !

(NICHOLAS *enters from the highway*.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Wife,
This is a fellow that the sea of war
Tossed to my foot : my body-servant now,
A barber—

NICHOLAS. Sir, chirurgeon-barber.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Aye,
Chirurgeon-barber, Eleanor—Nicholas
By name. He loves me, so it seems.

ELEANOR (*giving NICHOLAS her hand to kiss*). Then welcome,
Good Nicholas !

NICHOLAS. Chirurgeon-barber, madam !

ELEANOR. Welcome, chirurgeon-barber Nicholas !

(ISABEAU PERTE, *carrying a baby wrapped in a cloak,*
comes out of the inn.)

ELEANOR. Thy first-born, Simon !

(SIMON DE MONTFORT *takes the baby into his arms and*
kisses it.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Wonderful little life !

My son ! See how his fingers catch my dagger !

Oh, the strong clutch ! This is a warrior's hand

Already ! I will have a dagger made

Of silver and sapling for him.

ELEANOR.

What, so soon ?

He is his mother's yet, and time enough

To make him all a man !

(They go apart.)

NICHOLAS *(making a leg)*.

I am, fair damsel,

My lord's chirurgeon-barber. May I greet thee—

Not to put fine distinctions 'twixt our places—

As one whose trencher may be next my own ?

ISABEAU PERTE. Sir, if you come so far as to the Court

You may slip 'neath the table when I sup

And I will throw you—if I think of it

Between a cardinal's jests—a crumb or so !

NICHOLAS *(unabashed)*. Prithee remember, I can cup and bleed,

And should a headache now—so white an arm,

So blue a net of veins—

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(bending over the baby in his arms)*.

Whence do we come ?

What is there here within this virgin brain ?

What memory or what wonder ? Are we born

Out of a conscious star, a realm of spirits

Where congregated souls have power of thought

And will toward action ? If 'tis so, and birth

Be thus foreknown—and, it may be, forewilled—

Is birth ascent or descent ? Aspiration

Or the last hope of spiritual despair ?

Is this small body's vast inhabitant

A spirit ambitious after life, or one

Lately subdued into humility

By some celestial failure ? But who knows ?

It were to fathom God. My little babe,

Heaven prosper and continually bless thee !

(He kisses and gives back the baby to ISABEAU, and, as he does so, notices the embroidery on the cloak.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Why, what is this? The royal arms
of England

Upon my son?

ELEANOR. But is he not a prince?
His grandsire was the King of England, Simon;
And now his uncle is the King of England.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. But this is not my coat.

NICHOLAS (*sententiously*). It should be gules,
A lion rampant, with a forked tail argent.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I prithee let him wear my arms
when next

Thou broiderest a cloak.

ELEANOR (*to ISABEAU, rather bitterly*). Remember: gules,
A lion rampant, and a forked tail argent,
When next we sew a scutcheon on a cloak
To wrap our little princeling in! Remember.
Take him within now.

(ISABEAU carries the baby back into the inn. NICHOLAS,
*receiving no encouragement to follow her, shrugs his
shoulders and goes back into the highway.*)

ELEANOR. There is one I bade
Tarry your coming: Oxford's Roger Bacon.
I found him menaced by some mercenaries,
But royalled them to heel!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. These mercenaries!
This is a land for ploughshares, not for swords.
How will the King receive me?

ELEANOR. As his brother.
Your quelling of revolted Gascony
Has surged you up high tide into his heart.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. And Richard of Cornwall?

ELEANOR. Oh, my brother Richard
Hath gone to Almaine, seeking him election
As King of the Romans! He will trouble you not.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What of the barons who so hated
me?

ELEANOR. 'Tis de Valence and Peter of Savoy
They hate, proud and bejewelled drones, not you:
Your conquering sword has won them to your worth.

You ride from here into the place of power.
Fear nothing—and fear none ! While Henry reigns
'Tis thou shalt rule. Thy little span of exile
Has served thee well, my Simon.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sweet, at last

It is the ' thou ' again upon those lips :

I took thy ' you ' for coldness, and it chilled.

ELEANOR. Thou wert so testy with the pretty cloak !

(ROGER BACON comes out of the inn.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Great sir, but this is very pleasant to
me !

What wayfare chance has wrought our meeting here ?

ROGER BACON. I am come from Paris, from my cloister,
bound

To Bishop Grosseteste. He is ill.

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Ill ? Grosseteste ?

I grieve to hear it, sadly grieve to hear it.

Where lies he ?

ROGER BACON.

Good my lord, at Buckden.

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Greet him

With all my lovingkindness. Grosseteste ill !

ELEANOR. 'Twas in my thought to tell thee as we rode

This evening, Simon, through some Kentish wood,

That the surrounding peace might lull thy pain.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Dear woman, womanly ; but not
have lulled !

I love him, Eleanor, with that spacious love

Man feels for man, linked in the war of life.

Is it not true, philosopher, that shared ills

Bind folk together and make their ills seem less ?

ROGER BACON. There is the dark about us and before,

And only in human eyes is any light ;

Yet in the spirit there is a greater light,

A well of light whence we may draw our fill,

An we dip urns of faith.

(ELEANOR goes up the steps to the inn doorway and stands
looking out over the country beyond the wall. Presently
she is joined by ISABEAU PERTE.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. 'Tis in ourselves, then—
Our spiritual comfort?

ROGER BACON. Everything
Is in ourselves, and there is nothing known
Or seen or felt that is not of ourselves :
Perception and conception are within
And not without. Even heavenly grace itself
Is our possession, not an alms from Heaven.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O celibate, who knowest not the love
Of woman, it is love is heavenly grace,
A very alms from that God who is Love.
I have a wife : all that I know and feel
And see resides in her, not in myself ;
Being hers, myself am now myself no more.

*(A murmur has grown without, and HENRY DE HASTINGS
enters from the highway with YVONNE D'ELORMIE and
an OLD PEASANT. YVONNE goes to ELEANOR.)*

SIMON DE MONTFORT. How now, de Hastings?

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Sir, this agéd man,
Seeing our force without, has made to us
To get him justice and protection.

(To the OLD PEASANT.)

Speak ;
This lord is Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester.
*(The OLD PEASANT falls to his knees before DE MONT-
FORT. He speaks with great and simple dignity.)*

THE OLD PEASANT. I am fourscore years and two, and all
my days
Have been an honest man, a man of toil,
A tiller of the ground. I have lived my life
Close to the dust, and dust has been my portion ;
Old age has earned its pennyworth of quiet !
Sir, not an hour back, came a band of men,
A band of ribald, wicked mercenaries :
They beat me out of doors, mocked my white hairs,
And set my roof afire ! The thunder-stone
Dash them like corn !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By the arm of St. James, de Hastings,

This angers me! You shall be recompensed.

THE OLD PEASANT. Heaven bless your comings in and goings forth!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. From my own purse see he be recompensed!

THE OLD PEASANT. I have beheld this day a righteous steward.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Our folded hands were traitors past reprieve:

This shall be looked to!

(A YOUTH rushes in, nearly distract, followed by NICHOLAS and certain of DE MONTFORT's men-at-arms, who would restrain him, but at a sign from their master release him.)

THE YOUTH. All of her silver hairs
Shall, one by one, be bloodily avenged!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Possessed—or dispossessed? Let go of him!

THE YOUTH. My mother. . . . Slain! The mercenaries!
Old, poor,
Infirm and blind! My mother. . . . Give me revenge!
Give me revenge!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Now, by the sweat of God,
Is this a Christian kingdom? Saracens
Were cleaner dealers than these mercenaries!
Is this my brother Henry's governance?

(A YOUNG GIRL runs in and kneels to DE MONTFORT, clasping his knees and sobbing so that she cannot speak. A concourse of folk has gathered about the inn, overflowing into the inn-yard. ELEANOR comes down and stands beside her husband. The HOSTESS and PETER appear in the doorway and stand with ELEANOR's waiting-women.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Poor heart, I know thy case; thou needst not speak.
Sob out thy fill.

ELEANOR (*helping the girl up*). God fold thee in His pity !
SIMON DE MONTFORT. I will about these devilries to the
King.

(*Suddenly there is a cry among the gathered people, and in the distance can be seen flames and smoke and a ruddy sky.*)

CRIES. The ricks ! The ricks ! They have set the ricks
ablaze !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. These mercenaries, these pestilent
mercenaries !

Where is the governance of England's King ?
The law shall hang them ; and if there be no law
To hang such villains I will make that law !

THE CRIES. The barns ! They have fired the barns !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*to ELEANOR*). Daughter of John,
Thy sire signed once a Charter at Runnymede,
Whereof invulnerable liberties
Unto this land and people. . . .

THE CRIES. We shall starve !

The barns ! They have fired the barns and we shall
starve !

(*All is clamour and confusion and wailing ; in the midst of it, stern and thoughtful, stands, like a tower of strength, SIMON DE MONTFORT.*)

SCENE II : *A Chamber in Buckden Episcopal Palace.*

It is a small, vaulted and beamed room, with a great, tall window which looks out on to a misty garden. Beneath the window is a long couch ; and at one side is a stone aumbry in the wall, containing a silver cup and a small silver flagon. Covering the arched entrance, which is on the spectator's right, is a dark tapestry illustrating the story of the Egyptians overwhelmed in the Red Sea ; occasionally this tapestry sweeps and bellies in the draught, while the wind without moans eerily, and the skins lift along the rushed floor. In the garden can be seen a solitary tree, with one last leaf dancing in the bitter wind. It is a red-brown, late afternoon in October.

*On the couch is seated ROBERT GROSSETESTE, ill. With him
are the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY and the LEGATE.*

THE LEGATE. Grosseteste, I grieve to find you thus so weak.

GROSSETESTE. So weak, so worn ! Ah, Cardinal, and this
realm

Has such a naked need of youth and strength !

CANTERBURY. Take comfort, consecrate brother, till the
Spring

Renew you in your fulness.

GROSSETESTE. Canterbury,

Look forth : there is a last unsinewed leaf

On that lone tree. I have watched it, day by day ;

Brooded upon its battle with the wind ;

Looked for it every dawn with the first light ;

Seen it through tears. To-morrow 'twill be gone :

And so, too, I. Give me your gentle pardons—

I babble of myself ! My good Lord Legate,

What would the Pope of me ?

THE LEGATE.

The Holy Father

Is your petitioner.

GROSSETESTE. Petitioner ?

What need the sovran prince of Holy Church

Petition his poor shepherd of Lincoln for ?

THE LEGATE. He bids you to remember you still lie

Beneath the ban of excommunication

For your refusal to confer a stall

Of canonry at Lincoln on his nephew.

GROSSETESTE. What ! Is all England to be snuffed up

By every foreigner whose pecking nose

Has smelled our savour ?

THE LEGATE.

Good my reverend lord,

The Archbishop knows the policies of rule

Most estimable to the Pontiff's will,

Whose voice I am in England.

GROSSETESTE.

Cardinal,

Your voice in England is no English voice !

THE LEGATE. Bishop, my voice is that of Holy Church,

Which speaks with the same voice through all the world.

GROSSETESTE. A beggar's whine! O Christ!

THE LEGATE. So near to death
And still so stubborn in contumacity?

GROSSETESTE. So near to death I am afraid to palter!

THE LEGATE. Dare you go excommunicated hence?

Deny the Pope no further in this matter,
And 'tis his gracious will, expressly bidden,
That I absolve you here.

GROSSETESTE. No, Cardinal, no!

THE LEGATE. The Church's discipline——

GROSSETESTE. If such command
Rang from the highest order of angels, Legate,
I would refuse. It were an act unjust
Both to my conscience and my bishopric.

THE LEGATE. I shall submit this question to the King——

GROSSETESTE (*wearily and with despair*). Ah, to the King!

THE LEGATE. —and your successor, Bishop!

GROSSETESTE (*with a smile*). Death is so simple a hewer-
down of blocks

And barriers, Cardinal!

THE LEGATE. Oh, I am loth, my lord,
To leave you dying excommunicate.
Consider yet again.

GROSSETESTE. When I meet Christ
And say, 'I am excommunicate of man,'
He will make answer, 'Yea, of man, not Me.'
But should I say, 'I am excommunicate
Of my own conscience,' He would answer then
With sorrowful tears, and hide from me His face.

THE LEGATE. 'Tis your own soul; I will not trespass more.
Farewell, Archbishop.

CANTERBURY. My duty, eminence!

THE LEGATE. Grosseteste, farewell.

GROSSETESTE. We shall not meet again,
Lord Cardinal, and so—the long farewell!
(*The Legate has turned to depart, but at the door looks
back.*)

THE LEGATE. Had I Hermean wings upon my feet
I think this threshold's air would numb their plumes

Until I had spoken from my priestly heart.
The consecrating oil has made us kin,
And you pass hence to Death's great brotherhood.
Let Innocent thunder as he will from Rome !
I here do solemnly, in the name of Christ,
Annul the ban of excommunication
Laid over you, and do receive you back
Into the comely fold of Holy Church.
Amen !

GROSSETESTE. I cannot, Ottoboni, speak—
Christ bless thee !

THE LEGATE. *Pax vobiscum*, brother !
(*The LEGATE goes.*)

GROSSETESTE. Friend,
A little water—in the silver cup.
He will submit the canonry to the King
And the next Bishop. . . . Innocent, it seems,
Grows modest in his maw. A canonry ?
Why not the bishopric ? O England, England,
Thou smearest wormwood on that sacred breast
That suckled liberty, and we cry in vain
After thy providential and native milk.

CANTERBURY. Good Robert Grosseteste, Robert Grosseteste, check
This pother in your spirit. Be calm on earth
That you may enter calm at last in Heaven ;
For not by troubling is God's will obeyed,
But in all cheerfulness of heart, and trust
In His good purpose and permitted means.

GROSSETESTE. My lord of Canterbury, mark me well,
For I speak truth. England is lying sick
And is in present need of grateful herbs
Which, if we do not with swift hands compound,
Will then lack virtue 'gainst a plague so dread
As to be past all simple remedies.

CANTERBURY. O troubled brother, revolt against the way
And custom of established things ploughs up
The solemn acre of philosophy.

GROSSETESTE. But—God be praised !—there is one to whom
I look

For some good parley in this cause hereafter.

CANTERBURY. And he?

GROSSETESTE. Simon de Montfort.

CANTERBURY (*whimsically*). French, good Lincoln !

A foreigner to quell these foreigners?

GROSSETESTE. He is Earl of Leicester, so, an English peer,

And, through his mother's mother, of English blood ;

A manly dealer, no pranked jay—a falcon

A-soar above the Queen's sleeked nightingales !—

One, too, of power and influence with the King,

Having the King's own sister for his wife.

Pray God he come before I breathe my last !

For when I felt my sickness gathering tide

I sent to him. He is coming. Haste him, Lord,

With utmost speed, lest he should find me hence

And gone on my immortal pilgrimage,

With all I am fain to say, untold, unknown !

CANTERBURY. He may do much, being now once more in
favour.

The shadow of exile was an April shadow

Betwixt two laughs of sun.

GROSSETESTE. The King but feared
His brother of Cornwall and the turbulent barons ;

It was a storm soon blown. And then the Gascons

Brake in revolt, and who but he could quell them ?

What else, Archbishop, should King Henry do

But stand the friend to such a buckler to him,

Now home again from exile and from conquest ?

CANTERBURY. With the King's favour, yes, he may do much.
(ROGER BACON *enters*.)

CANTERBURY. Here comes the good Franciscan, Roger
Bacon,

To tend you and to sit with you awhile.

GROSSETESTE. Oh, hearken ! Heard you hoofs ?

ROGER BACON. There is no sound

Save ripple of wintry water in the dyke.

GROSSETESTE. I seem to have kept my vigil a thousand years !

CANTERBURY. My lord, I have outstayed my leisure long.
The sand is run again.

GROSSETESTE. It runs so swift now !

CANTERBURY. God's good betide thee, Grosseteste ! Fare
thee well !

Thou shalt have sure remembrance all my life,
Both in my love and prayers.

GROSSETESTE. O Canterbury,
Let not my sheep be harried by the wolves ;
Give them a mighty shepherd.

CANTERBURY. If my voice
Shall count, so be it !

GROSSETESTE. Fare thee well !

(*The ARCHBISHOP goes.*)

ROGER BACON. My lord,
Shall I read to you from your breviary ?

GROSSETESTE. No, Roger, for to-morrow I shall say
Matins in Heaven. O Simon, come, oh, come !

ROGER BACON. Let me shake out your pillow—so.

GROSSETESTE. Aye, so.

How prospered, Roger, that experiment
With the dark grains of thy combustible powder ?

ROGER BACON. Full well, my lord. That army sinewed
with it

Will overpower all press of chivalry
That hath it not as engine. That is sure.

GROSSETESTE (*almost as though prophetically*). Son, bury thine
invention deep in earth !

ROGER BACON. And where my brain, my lord, wherein it
lies ?

Sir, if not I to-day uncover Nature
To-morrow will another lay her bare.

GROSSETESTE (*dreaming*). Nor back to the beginning, neither
forth

To the end, I pierce !

ROGER BACON. Nor yet pierce I to the end :
Wonders, and aery marvels, and a prelude
To intercommunication with the spheres !

GROSSETESTE (*arrested*). Bacon, what sayest thou? What further terror

Is boded for mankind in thy deep spirit?

ROGER BACON. Terror, my lord?

GROSSETESTE. There is that terror, my son,
In mortal aspiration to be immortal
That Time, in watching its own womb in fruit,
Will blanch, itself, for terror!

ROGER BACON. But not Man :
He shall build wings and soar ; he shall search out
The caverns of the thunders, and shall tame
The lightnings that now roam immune ; the skies
Shall prosper from his sowing ; he shall reap
The harvest of their Pleiad fields, and buoy
Long channels through their oceans, verge to verge,
From planetary continents to isles
Of superlunar light, till bourn to bourn
Shall hum with wingéd traffic, and the stars,
At quays of flame-flanged meteorite, enhouse
His daring carracks on their voyage to God !

GROSSETESTE. We build our lives upon the sand of death,
But from God's bosom we shall look on life
And smile then at its dusty imagination.

(*An ATTENDANT enters.*)

THE ATTENDANT. My lord, Earl Simon——

GROSSETESTE. Haste him, haste him, friend !

(*The ATTENDANT bows and withdraws.*)

GROSSETESTE. Leave us, friar Roger ; much have I to speak,
And intimately.

(*ROGER BACON goes. At the threshold he bows before the entrance of SIMON DE MONTFORT, then passes out.*)

GROSSETESTE. Ah, son, son, son, I am death's . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My loved and honoured friend——

GROSSETESTE. Forbear thy grief——

Forbear thy tenderness, so short my term !

Thou must be patient, too, and wise to sift

Unwinnowed words and fill the breathless voids

Of dying speech.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I will, I will. What is it ?
 GROSSETESTE. This land, this folk——
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. I hearken.
 GROSSETESTE. Love them, Simon.
 Protect their lives, their life !—
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. This is a tree
 Shakes down wild fruit !
 GROSSETESTE. Shield them from covetous rapine ;
 From the harsh greed of Peter of Savoy,
 And the grim scorn of William de Valence ;
 From usurous Mansel, and the waxen . . .
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. King ?
 GROSSETESTE. Who clappered then ? Simon, could I but
 pierce
 Into thy secret eye, and learn what broods
 Behind its socket, like a rust ingrained,
 After thy travel hither ! So many leagues
 Of England journeyed through, so many hamlets—
 So many hamlets ridden past to-day.
 Thou answerest not !
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. Have I a voice of flame
 To scorch the sowers of so rank a harvest ?
 Answer ? What answer is there in a man
 Who sees and pales at seeing ?
 GROSSETESTE. Son, I shall rest
 Within my grave now ! Yesterday I feared
 I should walk ghostly o'er the night's black dew
 Till England smiled once more.
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. If I avail,
 If in this realm avail my word and will,
 Your spirit shall rest, yea, by St. James's arm !
 GROSSETESTE. Bend lower. The King has summoned the
 Great Council
 To Oxford.
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. Yes. I am bidden thither.
 GROSSETESTE. There
 Speak ! Thou wilt find confederates of zeal
 To cry upon it Amen !—Gilbert of Gloucester,
 Walter de Cantilupe, and many another.

I have noted them. They do but lack a head—
Thee. As to them, confer with Adam Marsh ;
He has them in his bosom, locked and sealed.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I will, to-night.

GROSSETESTE. The Charter of Runnymede . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My lord ?

GROSSETESTE. Have it confirmed . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My utmost to it !

GROSSETESTE. Bend lower, and whisper. Swear it to me.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I swear !

GROSSETESTE. No one shall come between thee and this
work ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. No one.

GROSSETESTE. Not though it were thy friend, thy trusted
And most immediate friend ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Not though it were
My friend.

GROSSETESTE (*with still deeper insistence*). Not though it
were thy wife ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Not though——

My wife ? Is she not all true woman ? Nay,
I will not wrong her so !

GROSSETESTE (*intensely*). If thou dost love me,
Swear it—for my deep comfort's sake !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*smilingly humouring him*). Content
you !

Not though it were my wife !

GROSSETESTE. Keep strong and brave.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sir, through the memory of your
strength and courage !

GROSSETESTE. Beware thyself, so to great purpose vowed ;
Keep ever in steadying leash that smoky wrath
Which on a sudden can so blind thy moods
And lap them round in murk and fiery gleams,
Improvidently swift to give offence,
Toppling confederacy.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Aye, on my soul !

GROSSETESTE. See that thou panoply that inmost soul,
Simon, against the multitudinous hours

At hand to smite it down. Do not thou let
 The bitterness of temporal tribulation
 Break thee, but strengthen ; cast thee down, but raise ;
 Sadden thy spirit, but gladden. Tribulation
 Is to the just as pruning is to vines,
 Ploughing to untilled land, washing to rags,
 Healthful but bitter medicine to the sick,
 The moulding hammer to the unshapen vessel,
 The purifying fire to gold. Esteem
 Troubles as but the means to conquer troubles—
 In the ardour of the busy fight forgetting !
 The discipline of long adversity
 Is thus no grievous but a joyous thing.
 Can it be other, leading, as it doth,
 To that most excellent patience which was Christ's ?
 Suffer, then, with an understanding heart
 The pangs of tribulation : and ascend,
 By steep humility's steps, unto the height—
 As but befits thy name—of the Strong Mountain,
 Even Christ, the Mountain loftiest of all mountains !
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. I shall but stumble, Grosseteste,
 after you !
 GROSSETESTE (*wandering*). It is so peaceful in mine orchard
 close,
 The river rippling by ; and from the copse
 The blackbird calls his meshed, deluded mate—
 As Christ His bride the Church. Look, look, the
 swallows . . .
 Their shadows flit across the sundial's calm . . .
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. I have overwearied you.
 GROSSETESTE. Oh, the last dream
 Is sleep . . .
 (*He dies.*)
 SIMON DE MONTFORT. So sleep ; and be thy dream God's
 peace !
 And now the trumpet of thy soul shall ring
 To my soul clarion till I sleep as thou !

ACT III

In the Dominican Convent, Oxford.

It is a great hall, with a groined oaken roof. A high window is on the spectator's left, and through it can be seen a sky in full flower with stars. It is a full moon. The entrance, an uncurtained, oak-doored archway, is on the spectator's right. Centrally in the wall facing the spectator three stone steps lead into a large and vaulted apse, in which is a long oaken table with parchments and writing materials thereon. At the table are two elevated chairs of state for the KING and QUEEN, and other seats. The apse is lighted by huge ecclesiastical candles in golden, richly carved candlesticks, and the main hall by two torches in iron sconces on the walls, one on either side of the apse. There is a glowing brazier in the well of the hall.

Attendants are busied in the apse lighting the candles. ROGER BACON is standing at the window, gazing forth. The attendants depart and ADAM MARSH enters.

ROGER BACON. How like a melody to enchanted ears
Is to the eye the solemn, brilliant moon !
Methinks death must be somewhat like this night . . .

ADAM MARSH. Still at thy meditations, brother Roger ?

ROGER BACON. Still at my meditations, brother Adam.
What of it ?

ADAM MARSH. Thou must hence. Hast thou forgotten
The King and the Great Council of the Realm
Hold practical session in this hall to-night ?

ROGER BACON. So I must cease from Truth's eternal cares
That fools may babble of their temporal folly !
What have ye gotten from your practical men ?—
Mad trouble and hot contention in the world.
While we, the dreamers, have distilled for you
Quintessences of peace ! Who enters yonder ?

ADAM MARSH. Hooded and masked and mantled—nay, I
know not.

Someone he is with power to pass the guard.

Let him speak first : he should declare himself.
His voice, too, may betray him.

ROGER BACON. By his gait

The King !

ADAM MARSH. The King ?

ROGER BACON. Aye, very like the King.

ADAM MARSH. 'Tis so, indeed. But, see, he makes to us ;
Soon we shall hear his voice.

KING HENRY. Sirs, reverend friars . . .

ROGER BACON. (The King's voice !)

ADAM MARSH. (Of a surety, so !)

KING HENRY. Good sir,

Which of your reverences is the magician ?

ADAM MARSH. Magician ?

ROGER BACON. (Honest Adam, he means me !)

KING HENRY. The great magician-friar who sees the
morrrows.

ROGER BACON. What would you, sir, if I be such an one ?

KING HENRY. Sir, are you Roger Bacon, the magician ?

ROGER BACON. I am that Roger Bacon, a Franciscan.

KING HENRY. Mighty magician, I would speak with you,
An urgent suppliant to your wondrous wisdom.

ROGER BACON (*making mock passes in the air with his hand*).

See that you move not from the magic circle

Wherein you stand !

(*He plucks ADAM MARSH by the sleeve and takes him apart.*)

'Tis superstitious Henry !

We will not pierce his thin disguise, for mirth's sake,

Let us have seasoning with our supper, Adam !

Now hide thy laughter underneath thy cowl ;

Listen, and mark me fool him.

(*He returns to where the KING is standing.*)

On what matter

Do you come hither to consult my art ?

KING HENRY. Matter most personal and immediate,

Whereto are subject my content and peace.

I am like a horseman doubtful at cross-roads,

A horseman fain to know what chances lurk

In each, that he may ride the surelier on,
Master alike of fortune and his way.

ROGER BACON. Give me some clearer vantage to your mind.

KING HENRY. There meets to-night the Council of the
Realm

Within this hall ; the King and his chief barons
May rise full tide in wrangle and dispute.

ROGER BACON. Sir, peradventure—as is very proper
To those who blunder for the weal of peoples !

KING HENRY. Teach me the flow and ebb of such dispute.

ROGER BACON. The sea is bondman to the imperious moon ;
And man is bondman to his own five wits.

KING HENRY. You send me groping into misty shadows.
Tell me more clearly ; will the King prevail
Against his murmurous barons, or be hedged
And circumscribed as John his father was ?

ROGER BACON. The governance of kingdoms is of home-
spun ;

The governance of self of cloth of gold.

KING HENRY. I am wondrous fain to have your prophecies,
To tread the apocalypse of circumstance,
To be your wisdom's almsman . . .

ROGER BACON (*calling loudly*). Barbason !
Amaimon !

KING HENRY. Sir, what do you ?

ROGER BACON. I do summon

Familiar demons to me. Barbason !

Ho ! Urian ! And Amaimon ! Come ! Arise
From your vermilion thrones in Hell's abyss !

KING HENRY (*recoiling*). No, no ! If this should be black
magic, stay !

ROGER BACON. That Urian is a potent spirit, the son
Of Mephistophilis and Proserpine.

KING HENRY. O Mother of God !

ROGER BACON. His horns are fiery bronze
All iridescent from the licking fires ;
His eyes are molten with Tartarian gold ;
His beard is fierce with Phlegethontic dew ;
His voice is like the thunder of the surf

Where boils the infernal sea below the towers
Of Pandemonium.

KING HENRY. O ye Saints of Heaven,
Encamp around me ! Guard me with your legions !

ROGER BACON. What would you, trembling mortal, with
the Saints

When here are devils at your beck and call ?

See, there—and there—and there !

KING HENRY. Oh, where ?

ROGER BACON. Your eyes

Must be too gross to see. Alas, the Time !

Unspirituality is so abroad

That no man now can see a devil—behind him !

KING HENRY (*spinning round*). Avaunt ! Avaunt ! Hence,
in St. Michael's name !

ROGER BACON. You do offend his honest devilship.

KING HENRY. I pray his pardon—I pray his utmost pardon.

ROGER BACON. He hears you, and he nods his terrible head.

KING HENRY. I pray his pardon once again. I pray

The pardon heartily of every devil

In presence here, if with a careless word

I have offended.

ROGER BACON. Well, speak warily.

A devil is as sensitive of honour

As any Christian king. Back, Barbason !

To heel, mad Urian ! This is my friend.

KING HENRY (*uneasily*). Would I could see them ! Are
there any close ?

ROGER BACON. Move not, upon your life ! I have called
up more

Than I can easily sway. Crouch down, Amaimon !

What, Demogorgon, thou wouldst menace me,

Thy master ? There—and there ! Obey me ! So !

'Tis well my arts are strong : you had else been swept
Into the midmost whirlpool of damnation !

The Gulf oped at your very feet ; I saw

The crimson tresses of the nether stars,

And the black, rolling murk ! They are potent fiends ;

They well-nigh mastered me. Look, how I sweat !

KING HENRY (*to ADAM MARSH*). Have I imperilled my immortal soul

In questing thus into the realms unseen?

(He crosses himself.)

ROGER BACON. This traffic, though not lawful, is not sinful,
So that you use it wisely. But, sir, come;
As saith the Brazen Head, 'Time is, Time was,
And Time is past!' You would enquire of Fate:
Come hither.

KING HENRY. Nay, I care not now. . . .

ROGER BACON. Stretch forth
Your left palm, and be silent while I scan
Such index as is there prophetical.

KING HENRY. I would begone; indeed, I feel not well.
Let me begone! The matter now may tend
Even as it will, and God have care of all!
I will not ask; I will not ask. Thou seest,
O God, I will not ask!

ROGER BACON. Why, how is this?

KING HENRY. I have sinned! Let me begone! I have
sinned, I have sinned!
Let me begone!

ROGER BACON. What of these demons raised
Unto your service here by difficult art?
Shall their dread journey from the abyss of fire
Be slighted thus? No, no, it must not be.
Offend them and they tear you limb from limb—
I have seen them, bloodied from a cardinal!
'Fore God, be wary now! They are murmuring yonder
About the portal; and their eyes are fierce
As with the hunger for you, body and soul!

KING HENRY. Are all your arts, then, spent? Have you
no phial
Of holy water whose besprinkled drops
Will give me passage?

ROGER BACON. No. Have you, my brother?

*(He turns to ADAM MARSH, who, afraid to speak, shakes
his head lugubriously.)*

ROGER BACON. Alas, ah, woe the night !

KING HENRY. St. Michael, save me !

ROGER BACON (*alarmingly*). Stay still !

KING HENRY. Holy magician—reverend wizard—

Know you no means to save me ? Oh, bethink !

Search your wise memory to its inmost heart.

ROGER BACON. Hush ! I remember. One means have I yet ;

And I pray God that it prove fortunate !

ADAM MARSH (*in a sepulchral voice*). Amen !

KING HENRY. Amen ! Amen !

ROGER BACON. Rise up. Stand there.

Do not you move ! Do not you stir ! 'Tis dread—

Dread as the bellowing of the herds of Hell !

(*He takes a phial of powder from his girdle and sprinkles a few grains on the flagged floor ; then he takes flint and steel and begins operations. Suddenly there is a loud explosion, and the KING, terrified, rushes blindly out.*)

ROGER BACON (*suddenly ceasing to laugh*). One of thy practical statesmen, Adam Marsh !

(*There falls between them a silence, broken in a short while by the nearing sound of women's gossip and light laughter ; then the QUEEN enters, with ELEANOR, followed by YVONNE d'ELORMIE and ISABEAU PERTE.*)

THE QUEEN. Who was it, wildly running, whom we met ?

He passed us like an arrow strongly shot.

ROGER BACON. A man, fair madam, of no destiny !

(*He goes, with ADAM MARSH.*)

THE QUEEN. These wise philosophers are passing curt.

ISABEAU PERTE. Indeed, la, passing dull for kissing, too.

YVONNE d'ELORMIE. Why, what a smell, good madam !

ISABEAU PERTE (*excitedly*). Sulphur, la !

Think you he has raised the Devil ?

ELEANOR (*smiling as to a foolish child*). It is said

He is a wizard.

ISABEAU PERTE (*sniffing*). 'Tis the Devil's smell !

THE QUEEN. One of his strange experiments. . . . Fear not ;
Here comes a phalanx of most holy priests,
With Walter de Cantilupe, Lord Bishop of Worcester.
(WALTER DE CANTILUPE, *Bishop of Worcester, with other Ecclesiastics, enters, moving stately in procession into the apse. Immediately following, a number of Barons, not in mail, enter, and, bowing to the QUEEN, proceed into the apse, where they stand in familiar converse.*)

THE QUEEN. My winsome girls, uncasket me your wits ;
Help me devise an after-supper revel,
One that shall put the wakefullest mortal cares
Into the same cave with the Seven Sleepers.

ISABEAU PERTE. La, madam, yes ! That would be debonnaire.

Hither, Yvonne. . . . But, hush, Prince Edward comes.
(PRINCE EDWARD *enters, with SIR REGINALD DE WARRENNE, both laughing heartily ; neither of them is in mail.*)

DE WARRENNE. My lord Prince Edward—pray you—no word more—
Else, faith of God, I die !

PRINCE EDWARD. Good even, sweet mother.

THE QUEEN. My warlike Longshanks ! Thou wert little once,
My little son.

PRINCE EDWARD (*smiling*). 'Tis now ' my little mother ! '
(*He kisses her and turns away with DE WARRENNE towards the apse. As he mounts the steps thereto, SIMON DE MONTFORT enters, accompanied by the EARLS OF GLOUCESTER, NORFOLK and HEREFORD, HENRY DE HASTINGS and other Barons, all in full mail. PRINCE EDWARD halts on the steps, surprised at their warlike garb.*)

PRINCE EDWARD. How now, my lords ? Apparelled thus for battle ?

Are ye come hither to fight the Saracen ?
Goest on crusade, Sir Uncle ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. On crusade ;
Thou sayest, Edward.

PRINCE EDWARD. Christ's name, I would with you !
The Soldan, by Mahound, will tremble, uncle,
When such a twain as thou and I advance
Upon his crescented phalanx ! Yea, and thou,
My fiery Gloucester, shalt ride third with us
To shake the throne of swarthy Termagant !
Now, by the Holy Cross, but we shall make
A puissant company, my lord of Leicester,
To follow in the steps of Lionheart !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O princely Edward, England needs
to-day

A truer Lionheart than Richard was.

PRINCE EDWARD. Why, then, good uncle, we must share
the skin,

Like mummers of a horse at Whitsuntide.

But come, sirs. The Great Council of the Realm
Has empty seats beyond this solemn arch
That cry aloud upon our tarriance here.

*(He joins the Barons in the apse, followed by those who
entered with DE MONTFORT. SIMON himself turns to
his wife and converses with her apart for a moment.)*

THE QUEEN. Go, sweetings, and prepare our frolic hour.

YVONNE D'ELORMIE. Madam, a *Court of Love*—

ISABEAU PERTE. With forfeits, madam. . . .

THE QUEEN. O Isabeau, Isabeau, is it not the forfeits
That most attract thy pretty lips?—red moths
Sick for a flame.

ISABEAU PERTE. I would not be a nun, la !

THE QUEEN. Call in to aid you Denis Pyramus
The poet. Go, my loves.

*(ISABEAU and YVONNE go, ISABEAU running, YVONNE
following more sedately.)*

THE QUEEN *(almost with malice)*. I shall not, Earl,
Look for thy presence in my *Court of Love*,
Although to win it were a triumph as great
As thine was oversea.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You flatter, madam !

THE QUEEN (*with a fine raillery*). Thou hast—O miracle!—
turned dreamer, Simon.

(*She proceeds into the apse.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*taking his wife's hands and kissing them*). Beloved one, how often I thank God
For such clear womanhood in thee as ever
Is my sustainment!

ELEANOR. As I for such clear manhood
As is in thee! I was but prouder once—
When I was told I had borne a man-child to thee,
Simon!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. May God be kindly to us both,
Kindly and infinitely kindly, lest
Man come between us.

ELEANOR. Why, what man should come
Between us, Simon, when I love thee?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Nay,
No man. Yet may the shadows of ourselves
Slip in between our kisses. . . . Grosseteste, Grosse-
teste!
My sweet, there is such sorrow in the world,
Such deathly change and imminence of chance,
It should behove us to hold fast on joy
Lest through our sifting, curious fingers, grain
By grain, it gradually drop and go.
Remember.

(*He crosses himself.*)

ELEANOR (*with puckered brows*). Simon, how thou art strange
to-day. . . .

(*KING HENRY enters, accompanied by WILLIAM DE VALENCE and JOHN MANSEL. The KING, as he enters, looks anxiously round and crosses himself repeatedly, but after a while completely recovers his composure.*)

KING HENRY. Now, Simon, Simon, welcome—and thrice
welcome!

My dearest sister!

(*He embraces them both.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. God preserve your grace!

KING HENRY. Brother, and thee !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*greeting the others*). Good gentlemen,
once more

To greet you is a pleasure oft I dreamed

When before Brescia and in Gascony.

JOHN MANSEL. You bring fame home with you, my lord.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Fame, I ?

A silver penny for her !

KING HENRY. Good my lords,

Our barons wait for you. Go up ; we follow.

(*De VALENCE and MANSEL go up into the apse. ELEANOR
has already gone to the QUEEN.*)

KING HENRY. We have heard some noise of thy severity

With our good Gascons. Nay, but let that pass.

I need thy counsel, Simon, and thine arm,

Mayhap, if so thy counsel counsel us.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My liege, I am bounden to this realm
and people.

KING HENRY. We know it, Simon, and it gives us joy

To have so near a subject near at hand

To be our buckler—and our falchion, too.

Thou hast turned great captain oversea ; I had letters

From the Emperor, that Frederick, filled with praise

Concerning how thou fought'st at Brescia's siege.

(*They go up together into the apse. On the top of the
steps the KING becomes suddenly aware that all except
his immediate friends are in mail.*)

KING HENRY. Wherefore, my lords, this battailous array ?

Are not we met here for the work of peace ?

What means this, Simon ? Why, thou, too, in mail !

I did not mark it diligently enough

When greeting thee. Make answer to thy King !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My liege, for England's succour and
defence

Come we in arms. Too long this realm, grown lax

From the loose rein, has been the mock of foes.

You have bidden us to council : our best counsel

Lies in our limbs enmailed and in our belts
Sagging with swords.

GLOUCESTER. Jesu !—Amen. Well said !

KING HENRY. I thank your care. Sit, barons, and may
God

Direct and prosper our deliberations.

(They sit.)

KING HENRY. I am beset, de Montfort, close beset.
Thou knowest that our Holy Father the Pope
Has lately on my nine-year-old young son,
Edmund, conferred the crown of Sicily ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I have learned as much.

KING HENRY. A proud day for a father :
His eldest son one kingdom's heir, his next
Another kingdom's monarch !

JOHN MANSEL. But not master.
Do you conceive, my lord ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Yea, very well,
I think, John Mansel. Is not Sicily's crown
Worn by the son of the Emperor ?

JOHN MANSEL. Conrad ; yes.

KING HENRY. The Holy Father's enemies, both of them—
Saving your favour with that Frederick.

JOHN MANSEL. And so, my lord, it has put grievous
strain——

KING HENRY. Upon our treasury. Firstly, to the Pope
We have sent our dutiful utmost for his wars
Against this Conrad ; secondly, King Edmund,
Our son, had to be furnished royally
With all the appurtenances of his rank
And dignity. These things have beggared us.
My brother Richard, who could buy all England
From his deep purse, is spending his whole wealth
In Germany, to bribe election there
To the Empire. By God's head, a brotherly trick !
All for an empty title, with no power—
King of the Romans. Faugh ! King of the Greeks !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Well, sire ?

KING HENRY (*impatiently*). Well, Simon, Simon, well ?
SIMON DE MONTFORT. Had you but seen !

De Hastings yonder rode beside my rein
And will bear witness how at every step
We all were saddened to the bone ! The barns
Gaped to the rains and winds, mere empty husks ;
No ricks stood in the fields ; the sheep and kine
Seemed wizened on the barren acreage ;
The cots and farms and homesteads were all rank
With livid poverty ; and famine stalked
From hamlet unto hamlet, mile by mile.

HENRY DE HASTINGS. In verity, my liege.

KING HENRY. But famine, sirs,
Is the act of Nature and of God ; not ours.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. But yours it is, sire, to relieve dis-
tress ;

And government is yours, and yours its lack.
Alas, your thin, poor, harried, starving folk !
I spake to some. They answered terrible words,
Telling of tax on tax, their all devoured ;
Of fire and rape, and foreign mercenaries ;
Of civil rights denied, and justice sold ;
Of petty tyrannies of petty men
Who have your grace's warrant and no heart.

KING HENRY. These things are incident to every realm.
Our brother Louis of France might hear of such
From his own kingdom while in Palestine,
If he neglected that most sacred war
To listen to these worldly accidents.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. King Henry, have you never ridden
abroad

Save with a herd of flatterers in your train
To blind you with their prattle ?

KING HENRY. My lord Earl,

I asked your counsel how to raise me moneys——

SIMON DE MONTFORT. For whom ? For your own people ?
No, the Pope !

For what ? For your own kingdom's betterment ?
No, for an empty title for a child !

DE VALENCE. Did I not warn your grace to put no trust
In one from old a traitor ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Pembroke, no !

I am neither a traitor nor a traitor's son—

Our fathers were not of a pattern !

DE VALENCE (*leaping to his feet*). Christ !

KING HENRY (*rising, the rest with him*). Silence ! Your
girding at my governance

Comes fitly from so harsh a governor

As you were yonder, Earl, in Gascony !

I have heard complaints how you imprisoned there,

And put to death, many most peaceable folk ;

With other serious charges that ourself

Will duly sift, my lord.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My acts stand white.

KING HENRY. Your manifest obedience here and now

Is the true measure of your innocence !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I know the accusers : Gascons whom
I quelled ;

Once rebels to you, now your sycophants.

Your knowledge of their ancient treacheries

Should show how worthy is their testimony !

KING HENRY. Pay to my Treasurer, Leicester, what you
stole

By pillage of my subjects oversea !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Stole ? Pillage ? Now, by the
honour and might of God,

Were you not shielded by your royal name

'Twere an ill hour for you wherein you spoke

Such lying words ! Who would believe you, King,

To be a Christian ? Have you ever confessed ?

KING HENRY. Confessed ? Why, yes.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. But what avails confession

Without repentance, aye, and satisfaction

For our misdeeds ? And what of all misdeeds

Can be found blacker in a Christian King

Than such misgovernment as yours ?

KING HENRY. I never

Repented in my life of aught so much

As I do now repent permitting you
To enter England and hold lands and office,
So that you now wax fat and kick !

PRINCE EDWARD. My liege—

De Montfort—let us all remember here
The weakness of mortality and forget
The weaknesses of ourselves !

WALTER DE CANTILUPE (*to DE MONTFORT, in a voice of thunder*). Trumpets of Zion,

Is this our hands to Liberty's holy plough,
Simon de Montfort ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*after a pause*). Walter de Cantilupe,
'Tis not thy voice, not thine, but that dead voice !
Oh, patience, my lord bishop . . . Grosseteste, Grosse-
teste,

I will be tempered as my sword, my sword.

(*He turns swiftly to the KING.*)

For England's barons, present here, I speak :
We will not grant you moneys—for the Pope ;
We will not fight a long and prodigal war—
To set a child upon a foreign throne ;
We will not suffer this great-heritaged realm
To be leased out to mincing troubadours
And selfish witlings, but will have it swayed
By just and soberest men who have a heart
For others' weal and for the public name
And the honour of themselves.

DE VALENCE. God !—for my sword.

Thy traitor's head should spin to the King's feet !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*taking a roll of parchment from the table*). Sir, this great Charter that your father signed

At Runnymede laid down against these evils :
Bad kinghood here is schooled, bad governance
Rebuked, injustice shamed, and freedom trothed
To clean-hearthed England as magnificent Venice
To the Adriatic Sea. Confirm this Charter,
And govern in accordance with its terms.

(*He hands the Charter to the KING.*)

KING HENRY. By God's head, Earl, am I thy King or not ?
SIMON DE MONTFORT. Our King, my liege ; therefore the
Charter's bondsman.

KING HENRY. Shall not a King be free to be a King ?
Vassals, to heel !

(He flings the Charter angrily on the table.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(pointing significantly to the armed
Barons)*. Sir King, whip us to heel !

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. Simon, well said !

GLOUCESTER. A hundred barons, sire,
And sixty thousand men-at-arms are ours
To carry our point past dallying argument !

PRINCE EDWARD *(taking the KING aside)*. Much, royal
father, as it grieves your son

To hear your kingly puissance outraged thus,
Yet if that gathering storm from eagled Wales
Is not to overwhelm our western marches—

An imminent and a terrible jeopardy !—

Such satisfaction as a word may give

Is both my counsel and my prayer. And, too,

My liege, have I not thrice, and thrice again,

Urged you upon these matters even as they ?

KING HENRY. Thou art yet too young to probe my policy,
Edward ;

Nevertheless their angers must be foiled,

Else are we naked to necessities

Of dangerous pith. My lords, my princely son,

Careful—even in his blossoming heat of youth—

Of our dear people's weal, has counselled me

Embrace your loyal advice and by my oath

Confirm the Charter's solemn covenants.

THE QUEEN *(scornfully)*. This were not thus in my Provence,
my Henry !

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. Form we a circle, barons, with the
King,

With each a lighted taper in his hand,

Which, thrown to ground and quenched the while we
swear,

Shall symbolize the quenching of that soul
So far a damnéd enemy to Grace
As to be perjured of this oath hereafter.

(They take lighted tapers in their hands and make a circle with the KING. WALTER DE CANTILUPE addresses first the KING and then the Barons and Ecclesiastics.)

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. Keep thou the Charter signed at
Runnymede,

In every tenour as therein set forth ;
Keep ye your faith together for the weal
Of England and the purging of the state ;
And so may Christ be with us all, Amen !

KING HENRY *(letting his taper fall)*. Amen !

THE OTHERS *(letting their tapers fall)*. Amen !

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Amen !

THE QUEEN.

Come, Edward, come !

Hence with thy mother while thy father swears
Thy heritage into the dust ! A King !

(She sweeps out.)

PRINCE EDWARD *(as he passes DE MONTFORT)*. 'Twill be but
half a horse at Whitsuntide—

The hind-legs, uncle, quit the pageantry !

(He follows his mother. There is a general bustle as the Barons and Ecclesiastics break into groups and go. The KING and his companions, DE WARRENNE among them, leave the apse. On the steps he turns to DE MONTFORT.)

KING HENRY. You are swoln with your intrusion on the
steps

Of England's throne, with vanity of place
From having wed our sister. That this hand
Could of its natural royalty annul
That mischievous sacrament !

DE WARRENNE.

Annul, my liege,

What never stood confirmed ?

KING HENRY.

How now, de Warrenne ?

DE WARRENNE. I bend my bow, sire, at a stir i' the forest,
 And if I miss . . . there was an antler flashed !

KING HENRY. My humour is not now for riddles, sir.
 Come, gentlemen.

DE WARRENNE. May I not shoot, my lord ?

KING HENRY (*eyeing him narrowly*). Is it the deer or doe
 whom you would hit ?

DE WARRENNE. Why, if your grace ask that, I need not
 shoot !

KING HENRY. Is it the doe or deer ?

DE WARRENNE. My lord, I have shot !
 The deer is hit, the doe——

KING HENRY. The doe, de Warrenne ?

DE WARRENNE. Is in her covert-convent safe again !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Judas de Warrenne, I shall remember
 you !

DE WARRENNE. You shall remember me, my lord of
 Leicester !

KING HENRY (*crossing himself*). We have sinned, we have
 sinned ; we have taken a bride from Christ !
 We must do penance. 'Twas no marriage, no ;
 Her vows were not annulled by Holy Church.
 We will take measures as shall put you forth,
 De Montfort, from the shadow of our throne.
 Come, sirs.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Annulled ! Vows ! Dieu me damne !

KING HENRY. John Mansel,
 Draw up a warrant for the Earl's arrest,
 And bring it after supper for my seal.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My liege, the dispensation of the
 Pope——

KING HENRY. Come, gentlemen. De Warrenne, sup with
 me.

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*plucking a parchment from his surcoat*).
 By the arm of St. James, 'tis in my bosom here——

KING HENRY. No more, no more ! I will not hear a word !
 (KING HENRY, followed by his companions, goes swiftly
 out.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By Christ, you shall, and ere you reach the gates!

(*He follows them. In the apse have remained ELEANOR and SIR HENRY DE HASTINGS. They both come down into the main hall.*)

ELEANOR. De Hastings——

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Yes, my lady?

ELEANOR. Have you a sister?

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Yes, madam.

ELEANOR. Do you use her as your King
Is pleased to use his sister?

HENRY DE HASTINGS (*distressedly*). Madam, madam. . . .

ELEANOR. Is not the King his subjects' pattern, then?

Or are you as my husband, sir—a traitor?

HENRY DE HASTINGS (*blazing*). By Termagant, no traitor,
he! Your pardon—

But I was moved.

ELEANOR. These husbands and these brothers!
To be the shuttlecock 'twixt their—courtesies!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Betwixt the kingliness of a knightly
man

And the unwaked kinghood of a slumbering King.

ELEANOR. I see my husband has a faithful reed

To pipe for him in echoes!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Till my death!

ELEANOR (*momentarily softening*). It seems he lacks not love,
this knight of mine!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Ah, madam, would the King but
listen to him——

ELEANOR (*hard again*). A King hears best the words of
those who kneel.

O God, O God, I scarce know which the more
I smoulder against, this brother or this husband!

(*She stands looking out of the window.*)

ELEANOR. It is so swift a flight—one clap of wings,
One flutter of a little weft of feathers—

From joy to sadness. And I was so joyous!

(SIMON DE MONTFORT *re-enters*.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. It lies beyond kings' meddling ! By
the Rood,
De Hastings, but de Warenne's face grew thin !
There was no word to part among them all ;
They stood and listened, fingered at the seal,
Poised it in open hand, and smelled it, even—
To judge its sanctity, belike !—and found it
Most absolute papal. 'Twas the laugh of them.
But yet there was no laughter in my soul—
No, body of God !

(He goes to his wife. She is still looking out of the window.)

Sweet wife, this seals thee fast
For mine ; nor king, nor priest, nor all the priests
And kings in all the world dare set aside
This roll of ribboned parchment scrawled with Latin,
Or sunder us, dear love, who love each other
As wonderfully as the sea the dawn.
Take it, my stirring Eleanor, my wife :
I did foresee, and here do reap my foresight.
'Tis the Pope's dispensation of thy vows,
And therein does our marriage stand confirmed
To all men. Take it to thee.

ELEANOR.

Lay it down

Yonder—there, with the Roll of Runnymede,
Traitor !

(She goes.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*to DE HASTINGS*). No word—I pray
thee say no word !

(He turns to take the Dispensation into the apse, but a sudden spasm of anger shakes him and he throws it violently across the hall. It falls dully and lies at the foot of the steps.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*impatiently*). Go. And no word, no
word. . . .

(DE HASTINGS goes. There is a dull knocking at the door.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. And now henceforth
It is a prayer beyond the grace of God

To ask forgetfulness of one small word
In one small moment spoken !

(The knocking is repeated.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Come you in !

(A servant enters, goes into the apse and quenches the candles ; then comes down into the hall and quenches one of the torches, and departs, shutting the great door. The hall is now in darkness except for the one torch and the red glow of the brazier. Suddenly the great door opens and a figure enters and shuts it behind him with a dull clang and stands in the shadow. There is a pause. De MONTFORT is standing beside the brazier ; the red light from it shines upon his face.)

THE FIGURE. Simon. . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(suddenly aware of the other)*. De Hastings, is it thou ? The King !

It is the King !

KING HENRY. Yes, Simon, it is I.

It is thy King, de Montfort.

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

O my liege,

Whence is this intimacy to a traitor,

One ordered for arrest, too, and made slight

In the eyes of her he loves ?

KING HENRY.

A monarch's heart

Is labyrinthine ; but a thread is spun

To lead thy steps within its inmost place.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. And forth again, my liege !

KING HENRY.

By God's head, not !—

Unless thou of thyself dost will it so,

Simon, hereafter.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Speak your thought, King Henry :

We are face to face, two men beside a fire,

With but a flame between us.

KING HENRY.

A flame, a heat,

A moment's anger such as two such men

Can be alight with and forget.

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

But she ?—

A little flame, a little flame between us ?

A gulf all strewn and laced with ravening fire !
Speak, speak ! I am malleable from sudden blows,
And 'tis your star to find me as I am.

KING HENRY. O Simon, couldst thou peer into my brain
And I be full of silence !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*abstractedly, then vehemently*). One
small word. . . .

There is no dispensation for a word.
She spoke it from her soul. King, tell me swift
What is to do, and I will do it, though Hell
Roar from its spumy deep to say me nay !
Give me some fighting, sire, to cool my blood.

KING HENRY. Fighting ? Aye, thou canst have of that thy
fill.

I had scarcely ridden hence into the Castle
And in from Gascony came letters, these.

(SIMON DE MONTFORT *takes them and reads in silence*.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O troublous Gascons !

KING HENRY. Once thy sword is up
Again they break out in as fierce revolt.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. No, not so fierce. Their necks be-
neath my yoke

Ached too much for their heads to lift too high !

KING HENRY (*with grudging admiration*). How does a man
make himself feared so well ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. They feared not me ; I made them
fear my justice.

KING HENRY. Thy justice : take it to them yet again,
Leicester.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My liege ?

KING HENRY. Return to Gascony.
Whom else have I to send ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*grimly*). Sire, send de Warenne !

KING HENRY. If 'twere a taming of wild colts, why, yes.
But these are Gascons. Go, good Simon, go !

Let us as gentlemen forget our heat.

I trust thee as I never trusted man

In all my life, not even my rough de Burgh

When I was but a boy.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sire, if I go?

KING HENRY. Ask of thy King thine utmost heart's desire

And he will grant it to thee from his love.

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*after a pause of consideration*). Then

I will ask, and you will grant it me,

And I will go.

KING HENRY. Ask what thou wilt : I grant it.

Is it some coveted lands or revenues?

Some office in the realm? Speak, it is thine.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Govern your kingdom, while I am away,

With law and justice ; let me on return

Find this a joyous land, a-flower with plenty,

And comely with the smile of liberty.

KING HENRY. By God's head, Earl, had I not promised it?

Well, I will do it.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Swear it to me, sire.

(*The KING stands irresolutely for a while, then he takes the torch from the sconce and quenches it by beating it upon the stone floor.*)

KING HENRY. So may transgressors of their promises
Be quenched and smoulder out and smoke in Hell!
So may God help me as I keep my oath,
As man, as Christian, and as belted knight,
And as anointed King! Amen!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Amen!

(*The two stand facing each other over the light of the brazier in the darkness, measuring silently their mutual distrust. As they so stand CARDINAL OTTOBONI enters. When he comes into the light of the brazier his scarlet robes are wonderfully brilliant.*)

THE LEGATE. Ah, sire! Your pardon, but I hoped to find De Cantilupe here.

KING HENRY. Jump with my wish, you come!
I was in thought to send for you, Cardinal.

THE LEGATE. My lord?

Till difficultest times be worn as smooth
As polished alabaster.

KING HENRY. Sir, I know.
But must I call damnation on myself
By very obedience to the discipline
Of Holy Church our Mother?

THE LEGATE. My lord?

KING HENRY. An oath—
I have sworn me a great oath. O Legate, Legate,
I am hedged in such a spiritual maze
As topples reason!

THE LEGATE. But the Holy Father
Has powers of dispensation. . . .

KING HENRY (*eagerly*). Dispensation!

THE LEGATE. I will to Rome. This business shall not wait.
(*He looks at the KING keenly.*)

But soft, my son!—at supper yesternight
We spake together, touching that canon's stall
At Lincoln. The Pope's nephew—

KING HENRY. It is his—
Get me the dispensation of my oath
And it is his!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By Hell and Termagant,
You faithless son of your as faithless father!
There shall, by God, Sir King, be dispensations. . . .
To me, barons of England! Hereford!
Gloucester! Norfolk!

(*The Barons in mail rush in.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Look yonder where he stands—
The King! He sends to Rome to be absolved
Of the oath he sware but now—to observe the Charter!

GLOUCESTER. Lord Legate, is this so?

THE LEGATE. It is not other.

KING HENRY. By God's head, it is so, and thrice 'tis so!
The Devil take your Charter and you, too!

(*More Barons, with HENRY DE HASTINGS, rush in, till the
hall is filled with men in mail, and the blaze and smoke
of borne torches and the dissonant murmurs of anger.*)

KING HENRY. I thank you, Leicester, for your loyal advice—

I will whip you to heel. Look to your heads!

I go to summon armies. I will quell you!

Come, Cardinal.

(He goes, with the LEGATE.)

GLOUCESTER. This will preserve us, sirs,

From growing fat! To arms!

THE BARONS *(drawing their swords)*. To arms! To arms!

GLOUCESTER. Now, Leicester, are our heads and England's cause

The care of thy most puissant warriorship.

Up, to thy task!

THE BARONS. A Montfort! A Montfort!

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Sirs,

Meet me with your arrays at Kenilworth

To-morrow sennight.

GLOUCESTER. That—God's heart!—will I.

THE BARONS. And I! And I! And I! A Montfort!

A Montfort!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. De Hastings, hast thou deeply looked in the eyes

Of my young babe? Has he Plantagenet eyes?

His mother's eyes? His grandsire's eyes, King John's?

(He rushes vehemently out.)

ACT IV

SCENE I: *The Interior of a Windmill near Lewes.*

It is an octagonal chamber, with huge, high, double doors, on leathern hinges and fastened by a great bar of wood that swings on a central peg, facing the spectator. When these doors are open an undulating and typically Sussex down-land, dense with flowering thorn, can be seen. Dusty sacks, some full, some empty, are piled dispersedly about. There are a rude wooden bench and a seat made from part of a tree trunk. From near the doorway a ladder leads up to the chamber above, from which can be heard the creak of machinery as the mill-sails go round in the wind. Through a large square trap in the wooden roof fall two sets of ropes, with pulleys. Near the top of these ropes is a small square hole sawn in the wooden wall of the mill, to the right of the spectator, and serves as a window. Anyone climbing the ropes could look out. Through this window and the chinks of the doorway and from the upper chamber streams the clear radiance of May sunlight. From time to time the noises of distant battle float up on the wind. The doors are shut.

The MILLER, an old, wizened bumpkin, laboriously descends the ladder.

THE MILLER (*singing uncertainly*).

*In youth when I did drink brown ale,
In youth when I did drink brown ale,
I rapped with my mug and called for more.*

(Calling up, but finishing below his breath.)

*Aye, rest 'ee close—and lay me golden eggs !
My back is bent, my bones cry out,
My back is bent, my bones cry out,
But I rap with my mug and call for more.*

(During the singing of the last stave he has sat down and taken up a large double-handled jug which stood beside the bench ; he is about to drink when a hollow knocking sounds on the doors.)

THE MILLER. Why, what the bodikins be that?

(Grumblingly he sets down the jug and unfastens the doors.

ROGER BACON stands without.)

THE MILLER.

Well, master?

What make you here? Afeared of the arrows yonder?

A merry day, a merry day!

ROGER BACON.

I beg

A moment's shelter, for this battle's tide

Has swept me from my gorse-ringed knoll of watch.

THE MILLER. Aye, sure, good friar, aye, sure. Sit 'ee down there.

(Having let in BACON, he secures the doors again. Then he returns to his bench and his jug. Silently he completely buries his face in the latter. After a long drink he withdraws his face for a moment to look at BACON, who is still standing.)

THE MILLER. Why, sit 'ee down!

(His face disappears once more and BACON, with a grimace, sits on the tree trunk. Finally, the MILLER sets down the jug.)

THE MILLER.

I'd bid 'ee take thy fill,

But it be empty now.

(He gives a senile laugh and sits stolidly, staring in front of him.)

ROGER BACON *(at a loss for a subject)*. What is your name, Good friend?

THE MILLER. Oh, I be miller, friar, just miller.

(The noise of battle swells louder for a moment.)

Sure, they be at it rarely! Hark to 'un!

ROGER BACON *(warily)*. The ancestral Chaos is inherited!

THE MILLER. What be this fighting all about?

ROGER BACON.

They fight—

These for a matter of prerogative,

Those for a fabulous Golden Age on earth

Which is behind, or yet before, its time.

(This being quite beyond the MILLER's comprehension, he looks despairingly at the vain consolation of the empty jug beside him.)

THE MILLER (*stolidly*). I never seed 'un ! Nay, I never seed 'un !

ROGER BACON. They fight to kindle Liberty's beacon-fires,
And save this kingdom from the mercenaries.

THE MILLER. Aye, blacksmith's daughter, she were carried off

To be a mercenary's pretty. Aye !

But she were ever a gipsy. And they killed
Red Richard—him that had old Lewes farm—
And took his meadows. Lammas Eve it were.
But they lets me alone.

ROGER BACON. For you they fight—

To lift the yoke of tyranny from your neck,
And ease you of the burdens on your back.

THE MILLER. Burdens ? And tyranny ? Be 'ee daft, good friar ?

Why, my old wife be dead these twelve year now !

ROGER BACON. The delicate wine of sacred Liberty
Doth need a daintier palate, Simon de Montfort !

(There is a loud knocking on the doors. The MILLER opens, and DENIS PYRAMUS, wounded in the arm, stumbles in. The MILLER, in his morbid interest in the flowing blood, leaves the doors wide. The shadows from the revolving mill-sails chase each other unceasingly without.)

DENIS PYRAMUS. Your succour, miller, for the love of God !

(He sees BACON.)

Great master, this is fortune ! Pray you now—
Your skill in healing on this arm.

ROGER BACON. With speed ;

But I must tear your surcoat for a linen.

Fight you upon the King's part or de Montfort's ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Upon the King's—my sword is as my lute.

(BACON rips a piece off PYRAMUS's surcoat and proceeds, much to the officious interest of the MILLER, to dress the wound. The noise of battle increases.)

THE MILLER. It pricked 'ee deep !

DENIS PYRAMUS (*to* BACON). Sir, does philosophy thrive
Near such a shambles?

ROGER BACON. Many an hour, my son,
I have sat and watched communities of ants
With profit; 'tis my wont that I should set
Communities of men so little higher,
And seek to profit from such contemplation
As semblances compel. 'Twill not bleed more.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Good sir, my thanks!

ROGER BACON. How goes the battle yonder?

DENIS PYRAMUS. 'Tis steady give and take, and little else.
Earl Simon is a puissant general;
When any ranks give way they are the King's.

ROGER BACON. Prince Edward?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Is our chiefest hope. I left him
In act to charge the ribald Londoners
Who lately pelted the Queen's barge with mud
At London Bridge. The Prince will show scant mercy,
If not for his father's, for his mother's sake.

(Great shouting and a frantic gallop of many horses are heard. They draw near, then pass away into the distance rapidly. DENIS PYRAMUS goes to the doorway and looks forth. His face lights with enthusiasm.)

KNIGHTS WITHOUT. St. George and Edward! Edward and
St. George!

DENIS PYRAMUS (*excitedly*). 'Tis Edward and his chivalry!
Longshanks! Longshanks!

He rides upon them like a mounted seraph!
He has scattered them, he has scattered them! He
has reached

Earl Simon's pennoned litter on the hill. . . .
And now is over the brow. God, he can lead!

(He turns and comes from the doorway.)

The Devil take his uncle for a coward!

ROGER BACON. The Earl of Cornwall?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Aye, fat, moneyed Cornwall—
I pray his pardon, Richard, King of the Romans,
Elected by his golden briberies

As heir unto the Holy Roman Empire.

'Tis well for kinghood that he bought his kingship !

ROGER BACON. What of his majesty the most august ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Why, gone, fled, nowhere to be found—
fat coward !—

Vanished at the first clarion of onset !

THE MILLER (*lovingly feeling a leathern pouch at his girdle*).

A merry day, a merry day, my masters !

DENIS PYRAMUS. Regretting your hot youth this hot fight
toward ?

THE MILLER. I be too old, and sweat much in the sun.

Be 'ee from London town ?

DENIS PYRAMUS (*airily*). Aye, peradventure.

THE MILLER. Be life as wondrous there as I hear tell ?

They do say peacocks roam wild through the streets !

DENIS PYRAMUS. Why, yes ; my bed-sheets are of peacocks'
tails.

THE MILLER. The Virgin love me !

DENIS PYRAMUS. 'Tis beyond your fortune,

Your face and your appearance, goodman miller,

So to be loved by virgins.

THE MILLER. 'Tis as maybe ;

'Tis an ill thing to speak ill of the dead,

And she be under grass these twelve year now.

(*Noise of battle still.*)

DENIS PYRAMUS (*going to the doorway*). Archers and horse-
men grapple hand to hand

In grim confusion. Satan !—where is Cornwall ?

His knights and men-at-arms chafe in disorder ;

'Twill be our ruin on this desperate field.

A malison on this arm ! I had thought to-day

To show Earl Simon poets, too, are men !

(*He turns back into the mill.*)

THE MILLER. They say 'ee eat the tongues of nightin-
gales. . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS. We fry young nightingales in molten gold,

And while we swallow them they trill and sing !

THE MILLER. Down to the very stomach ? Sing they there ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. Why, yes—in mine. I am a poet.

THE MILLER. Marry,

I would I were a poet !

ROGER BACON. To be a poet

Needs deeper singing than a nightingale's. . . .

THE MILLER. I cannot that.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Take heart, take heart ! In Heaven
We all must sing—sing with the Saints and stars.

THE MILLER. Nay, but I cannot sing. I tried it once,
And got a clout for't.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Then, good miller, sin
A little ere you die, and bide you safe
In Purgatory in a purging silence.

THE MILLER. Nay, when I purge I groan. I have woke
the house

A-purging.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Why, then, goodman, see you sin
More than a little, and go comfortably
To Hell.

THE MILLER. Lord, what a happy brain thou hast !
Ne'er had I thought o' that a twelvemonth through.
I am not too old, I think, but I can add—
God helping !—to my sins.

(He suddenly looks towards the doorway.)

Mother o' Jesu !

Who be it there ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. 'Tis Margoth.

ROGER BACON. Who is Margoth ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. A spy ; a camp-girl habited as a youth—
A strange wild slip, half tigress and half elf.

ROGER BACON. What rose has fallen among thieves, O poet ?
(MARGOTH comes slowly and sullenly into the mill.)

DENIS PYRAMUS. How now, Margoth ? What news ?

MARGOTH. I saw a mare

With a long arrow deep-shot in her belly,

And yet she was not dead, but feebly stirred. . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS. Is the King's brother, Richard of the
Romans,
Found yet ?

MARGOTH. He? No: nor will be this side sundown!

(She spits contemptuously.)

DENIS PYRAMUS. Didst thou not pass into Earl Simon's camp

At moonset yesternight? What didst thou see?

MARGOTH. There was a hush about the camp, an awe
As of a forest glade when evening comes.

The Bishop of Worcester rode between the fires
And blessed the knots of whispering men-at-arms
Who clustered round each fire; upon their breasts
They wore white crosses. And I saw the Earl:
His face was stern, a warrior's strong, stern face.

Yet when he spoke once with the Bishop, low—
He passed me as he spoke—and with his hand
Gathered as to himself the whole still camp,

A tear ran down his cheek. And when the dawn
Was bubbling with the musics of the birds

I stole away and followed night's last star

To our own camp—a camp of drunkenness

And harlotry. I thanked God for my dagger!

DENIS PYRAMUS. 'Twas so. God's body, Margoth, verily
so!

They entered battle dazed from wine and lust.

*(He goes disconsolately to the doorway and looks out. He
is joined by ROGER BACON.)*

THE MILLER *(leering at MARGOTH)*. Be 'ee a wench? But
'ee be winsome, sure,

My dusky froward!

MARGOTH. What is that to you,
Old leper?

THE MILLER. How thy mail do cling about 'ee!

My marrow be afire. . . .

MARGOTH. God's eyes, unhand me!

THE MILLER. Why, hoity-toity, springald! Nay, I know
How to keep peace indoors: I ha' tamed a wife,
Aye, such another wildstress as thyself.

I had her soused once in the ducking-stool.

A merry day! And there was still the cat;

But Providence saw to it that she died before,
And so she died with smiles. We buried her
With more spiced cakes and mead than if she had been
A queen of gipsies. It be something, froward,
To die a miller's wife.

MARGOTH. 'Twere something more
To live a miller's widow, by your leave !

DENIS PYRAMUS. Edward has followed too far in pursuit ;
He will return to find the field all lost.

ROGER BACON. We are spectators of the world, O poet ;
The flame of life is vivid at our feet.

DENIS PYRAMUS (*bitterly*). Show me the beauty, O philosopher,
We wear this flesh to find !

ROGER BACON. Even at thy foot !

DENIS PYRAMUS. I see but men who kill and moil and
mar. . . .

ROGER BACON. And I the eternal shuttles of the earth—
The way of wisdom is not always human !

(They stand and look deep into each other's eyes. The noises of battle have latterly swelled nearer and nearer, and BACON and PYRAMUS have but moved from the doorway when an arrow finds its mark in the doorpost and stands quivering there. MARGOTH promptly shuts the doors.)

THE MILLER. Better the rats come in than the arrows,
mistress.

MARGOTH. The little pebble from the catapult
Can dash the bird of bright wings from the sky
As well as the dull sparrow. Chance is rare
And the only jester.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Would the Prince had wheeled !
The best of England's knighthood rides with him ;
Ill can we spare so skilled a company,
So numerous, too.

ROGER BACON. Seek not to shape events ;
Let them the rather happen, like a fusion
Of opposites in alchemy.

DENIS PYRAMUS.

O master,

You have no cause to hate this Simon de Montfort.

ROGER BACON. Hast thou, my son?

DENIS PYRAMUS.

When I lie down at night

I am in pangs of my deep hate of him,

And fear a presence and one voice's music

Within the red tower of my tumbled dreams;

And when I rise up in the morning's hush

I tremble at the glad pipe of the birds—

Such hatred in my heart reborn!—and fear

The new day with its fanged and hissing hours,

And that sole presence and that voice's music

Within the grey tower of my crumbled life!

THE MILLER (*to* MARGOTH). Hast 'ee no home?

MARGOTH.

'Tis builded by the winds

And rains, and the great sky is over it.

DENIS PYRAMUS (*seated*). Philosopher, life could have made
me sing

As though a seraph whispered me the notes

And beat the measure with the Morning-star!

(He buries his face in his hands.)

THE MILLER. Hast 'ee no fire to tend, no babe to suckle?

MARGOTH. The woodland's wild-love nests, the stir of
leaves

About the little mice; they whisper and whisper . . .

The night-jar mocking at the nightingale.

THE MILLER. Hast 'ee no man to buss 'ee?

MARGOTH.

And the swallows,

And the last weary wings, and the last songs,

And the lone fire within me, and the tears . . .

There was no mother that I ever knew;

There was a gipsy sold me to a jongler.

THE MILLER. Why 'ee be crazy, wench, as well as wanton.

MARGOTH. Stay you the mill-sails, for the love of God!

How they roar round and creak and grind and grind . . .

THE MILLER. What, be 'ee fidgety?

MARGOTH.

Stay you the mill-sails!

Stay them, old leper!

THE MILLER. I will stay them, sure,
My froward, for a kiss !
(*He struggles with her.*)

DENIS PYRAMUS (*rising and coming forward*). Unhand the girl !
(*He sends the MILLER spinning against some sacks.*)

DENIS PYRAMUS. Would God I could see out ! Let us go up
Into the chamber above.
(*He goes to climb the ladder when the MILLER rushes forward to stop him.*)

THE MILLER. There is no window ;
'Tis but a store-place for my sacks, my sacks.

ROGER BACON (*suspiciously*). A store-place for your sacks ?
'Tis full of light . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS (*impatiently, looking up*). No matter ; I
could see through yonder vent
If I climbed up these ropes.

MARGOTH. Your arm is hurt ;
I will climb up.

THE MILLER (*concernedly*). No, not those ropes, but these ;
Those will let down my sacks.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Hell burn your sacks !
Climb, Margoth !

THE MILLER. For the love of God, not these !
Climb those, good wench, not these !

ROGER BACON. Girl, humour him !
(*MARGOTH agilely climbs the set of ropes indicated by the MILLER.*)

ROGER BACON (*to the MILLER, significantly*). Thou hast
much rich store above, eh, miller !

THE MILLER (*dully*). Sir,
There be a many sacks . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS (*to Margoth*). What canst thou see ?

MARGOTH. Simon de Montfort everywhere is victor !

DENIS PYRAMUS. God's malison upon his head !

MARGOTH. The knights
Of Richard of the Romans are pressed back
Upon our centre in disordered rout.

DENIS PYRAMUS. May the Great Devil brand the King of
the Romans

With a red 'coward' for all in Hell to know him !

MARGOTH. The Prince . . .

DENIS PYRAMUS (*eagerly*). What of the Prince ?

MARGOTH. He comes not yet.

DENIS PYRAMUS. That mad pursuit !

MARGOTH. The royal Dragon-standard

Is felled and torn, the King a prisoner !

DENIS PYRAMUS. The King a prisoner ? Then all is lost !

Come down, come down !

MARGOTH. A moment yet !

DENIS PYRAMUS. The scythe

Has swept full circle ; all is mown. Come down !

That I knew Richard of the Romans' burrow !

MARGOTH. The Prince ! He and his horsemen top the hill !

They stand as though astound.

DENIS PYRAMUS. Too late, too late !

MARGOTH. Earl Simon charges them with both his wings.

We shall behold them better from the door.

(She climbs quickly down and they all four cluster at the doorway looking out, the MILLER having thrown the doors wide. A shouting mass of pursued fugitives can be seen scattering away.)

DENIS PYRAMUS. Outnumbered and outweighed, 'tis in
vain !

They break and flee.

MARGOTH. And look, the Prince is taken !

DENIS PYRAMUS. Father and son ! De Montfort will be
King !

(A great noise of cheering greets the victor of Lewes as he rides towards the mill.)

THE MILLER. A merry day, a merr . . .

(He does not finish his sentence, for an arrow has taken him in the chest. He falls on to a heap of sacks.

MARGOTH bends over him.)

THE MILLER (*dying*). Oh, I be done !

Audrey ? Nay, she be dead these twelve year now.

Damn 'un, the dogs ! A plague o' Liberty . . .

(SIMON DE MONTFORT'S *triumphant army can be seen without, marching past the mill in their pursuit of the beaten Royalists. Some of the soldiery halt as they pass and throng the doorway. Suddenly ROGER BACON, with a grim smile, manipulates the other set of ropes.*)

ROGER BACON. His majesty of the Romans, most august,
Will give you audience, Denis Pyramus !

(*A huge store of dusty and bulging sacks falls to the ground through the large aperture in the roof and, in the middle of the sacks, splutters the KING OF THE ROMANS. As he rises, covered in flour, he is greeted by a great burst of ironical laughter.*)

DENIS PYRAMUS. Great Jupiter !

THE SOLDIERY. All hail, King of the Romans !

(*They raise their weapons in a mocking salute. A captain enters the mill with some of his men and claps the KING OF THE ROMANS upon the shoulder.*)

THE CAPTAIN. Yield to me, sire ! You are my prisoner.

(*Suddenly he and his men and those thronging the doorway stiffen to the salute : SIMON DE MONTFORT himself is at the doorway, looking within.*)

SCENE II : *The Cloisters of Westminster Abbey.*

It is the East Cloister Walk. Facing the spectator, at the far end, is a small doorway, in deep shadow, leading into Westminster Abbey. Nearer the spectator, and upon his right, is the entrance to the Chapter House. Facing the Chapter House and running the whole inner lateral of the East Cloister Walk is a series of arches giving on to the Cloisters' central plot of quiet grass ; through these arches pours a steady flood of brilliant sunlight, chequering the pavement here and there with splashes of clear gold. Beneath the arches, along their entire length, is a low, broad, continuous seat of stone.

The space in front of the Chapter House is filled with the bustle of Ecclesiastics and Barons, arriving and gathering, foremost among them being **WALTER DE CANTILUPE**, *the* **EARLS OF GLOUCESTER, NORFOLK and HEREFORD**, **SIR REGINALD DE WARRENNE** *and* **SIR HENRY DE HASTINGS**.

NORFOLK. Where is my lord of Gloucester ?

GLOUCESTER. Here, good Norfolk.

HEREFORD. Welcome, de Clare.

GLOUCESTER. My lord of Hereford,
Give me your hand. Bishop of Worcester, greeting !
Good morrow, noble gentlemen !

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. This day
We pluck the ripe fruit from the goodly tree
We planted with our strong, unfaltering hands
At Lewes and have grafted since through England . . .

NORFOLK. This Parliament that de Montfort here has
summoned
Should prove a prosperous field for us to till,
And sow with power——

HEREFORD. Till ? Sow ? Nay, Norfolk, reap !
We barons now are rulers of the realm,
The faithless King a shadow, and that wild eagle,
Young Edward, safe at Hereford in good keeping.

NORFOLK. Aye, we will carve this England to our
stomachs . . .

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. It is the day of freedom ! Would
that Grosseteste
Had lived to see this hour ! It is the lot
Too often of the noblest but to have
The mountain prospect of the Promised Land.
But great Earl Simon is our Joshua here
And enters in our Canaan to possess it.

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Simon the Righteous ! This high
triumph is his !

He has achieved his will and our intent :
Now governance is strong and law is mighty ;
The foreign wolves are dispossessed and gone,
With Peter of Savoy packed to Savoy ;

And the lean, crafty Mansel put from place ;
Aye, and the mercenaries shown the road
To Dover and the sea.

GLOUCESTER. How like you that,
De Warrenne?

DE WARRENNE. Oh, my hell-fire sheep will browse
A while in France and come home fat to fold !

HEREFORD. Are all of us now present? Shall we enter?

GLOUCESTER. The Commons are not come.

HEREFORD. The Commons ! Sirs,
Who are the Commons that we wait for them ?

NORFOLK. A certain number of the unnobled folk
Whom Leicester had elected by their fellows
In every shire to sit with us in council.

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. 'Tis scarce as yet upon the hour.

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Earl Simon
Himself is not yet come.

HEREFORD. I do not love
This policy of de Montfort—this admittance
Into the very heart of power and rule
Of those of low estate and no estate.
I do not understand it ; I do not trust it.

NORFOLK. He was most grave and earnest in the matter.

HEREFORD. Nay, peremptory, Norfolk.

GLOUCESTER. Here he comes.

(SIMON DE MONTFORT *enters.*)

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. The Peace of God be with you,
Simon de Montfort !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Amen, de Cantilupe !

HEREFORD. So ! Let us enter.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My lord of Hereford, we are not all here.

HEREFORD. Sirs, Commons or no Commons, let us enter.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The chosen voices of the folk of
England

Are not in presence yet, nor has the bell
Tolled noon. Have patience, noble Hereford.

HEREFORD. I roundly question your device in this ;

What shall it profit us to hear these voices ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sir, it shall profit England to have voices.

HEREFORD. Are we not England's voices, good my lord ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. No, Hereford, no. We have never in our lives

Lacked bread or roof or fire.

(WILLIAM DE VALENCE enters. *The Barons receive him coldly and haughtily.*)

GLOUCESTER.

This Earl of Pembroke !

This foreign blow-fly on the meats of England !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You are welcome, de Valence ! My lords, we need,

For England's service, even our enemies,

Who, when they serve our country, are our friends.

In England's name, you are welcome.

DE VALENCE (*disdainfully*).

Sir, I come

As one of England's barons : I come by right,

Not—(*pointing down the cloisters*) by election, as your commoners !

Alas, I brushed against them as I strode . . .

(*He flicks his mantle to cleanse it of the contact. The barons, more cordial, open their ranks to receive him. The Commons enter.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. In God's name, greeting, sirs !

(*The Abbey bell tolls the strokes of noon.*)

GLOUCESTER.

Shall we go up

Into the Chapter House ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

Why, presently, Gloucester.

(*He stands, a lonely and grave figure, and addresses them.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You see me, good my friends, a wearied man,

Wearied from battle and the brooding thoughts

That bow the shoulders till the crooked share

Be driven straight. I pray you pardon me

If I should from my body's weariness

Outweary patience ; but my soul would speak
 On what is here, among us little men,
 So great that 'twill outwing the flight of fame,
 Being more than famous, being that quiet toil,
 Like shepherds' businesses beneath the stars,
 That glows as with the dignity of God
 And yet is but a watch beneath God's eye
 On what we are set to keep. We are shepherds all :
 The shepherds of this English folk we love ;
 And since to love is to give all one hath
 It is for us to give even all we have
 To serve them and to succour them, for life
 Can be so bitter to the oppressed and poor,
 The sad and weak. But by magnanimous laws
 And strong and spiritual governance
 The hearths of all may hold a fragrant fire,
 A happy platter and a pleasant cup.
 We are the shadows as of Providence
 And must lay by the comeliness of pomp
 To be God's servants in simplicity ;
 We must be greater than ourselves, or else
 Of what poor service shall we stand confessed !
 We must be brotherly, with no greed for power,
 No lust for treasure, no vain jealousies
 Of treasure or of power, only the will
 To serve and spare not serving. This achieved
 We shall have won the privilege of death—
 Of rest. I pray God that our sons bear on
 This banner, underneath whose folds we triumph,
 Beyond the last horizon temporal
 Into the basecourt of the Eternal Castle
 Whereto all peoples march ! Methinks I look
 Into the morrows as from some high mount
 Of vision ; I can see the nationed earth
 Untyrannied, each man the governor
 Not of himself alone but of his state,
 The chooser and the curber of his King.
 And it will be from us, and from this day—
 From you, the chosen of your fellow folk,

Good Commons!—that the world will take this gift
Of Liberty, unensampled till this hour.

And now, in God's name, let us to our labours!

(The whole assembly follows him into the Chapter House.

*After a short while the QUEEN, unattended, comes out
of the Abbey; and at the same time ELEANOR enters
the Cloisters to go into the Abbey.)*

THE QUEEN. Coz, Mass is over.

ELEANOR.

I go in to pray,

Good madam.

THE QUEEN.

For thy husband's roylaldom?

Should I not curtsey to thee? Should I kneel?

Have I to thank thy sisterly offices

I am not in prison?

ELEANOR.

There is nothing, madam,

For which to thank me; and you know full well

Earl Simon and myself are not at one.

Indeed, indeed, I go but in to pray

For our poor love, our love.

THE QUEEN.

I pity thee;

Forgive me; I forgot! So great a love,

That sent him once a pilgrim unto Rome

To get the dispensation of thy vows——

ELEANOR. A pilgrim plodding like the meanest churl

Through that Italian dust and drouth and heat——

THE QUEEN. No troubadour did ever so, I swear!—

Such love to shed its blossom now!

ELEANOR.

Madonna!

Sister, no more. . . .

THE QUEEN.

Go in and pray, sweet coz.

And, after, come to me awhile. I wrote

A madrigal while brushing out my hair

Last night, and I can sing it to my lute.

I want thy praises, coz.

ELEANOR.

I do not promise.

THE QUEEN. To praise my rhymings? Nay, I——

ELEANOR.

No, to come.

THE QUEEN. Go pray ! And I will visit thy little sin
On Pyramus, who called my poem nought.
Farewell. Thou art pretty yet !

ELEANOR. God keep you, madam !

(The QUEEN goes. ELEANOR moves towards the small door to go into the Abbey. As she passes the entrance to the Chapter House DE WARRENNE comes out. She receives his obeisance haughtily and coldly.)

DE WARRENNE. Cast me a word, even though you cast
it only

As 'twere a bone unto a dog. A dog ?
My teeth are in your gown there, Eleanor,
And, shake it as you may, will not leave go !

ELEANOR. Let me pass on !

DE WARRENNE. By God, though I be made
The bloody scabbard to a hundred swords
I will take one luxurious memory down
With me into the whirlwinds of the Pit !

(He takes her roughly into his arms.)

ELEANOR. You dare do this ?

DE WARRENNE. I love you !

ELEANOR. Loose your hold
Of me ! You are from your senses. . . .

DE WARRENNE *(passionately)*. Ruby of women. . . .
This is Fate's splendour all in flame about me !

(As DE WARRENNE forcibly kisses her on the mouth DENIS PYRAMUS comes out of the Abbey. ELEANOR, released, with a dry sob passes hurriedly within.)

DENIS PYRAMUS. I saw her face !

(He strikes DE WARRENNE across the cheek with his open hand.)

You leprous-hearted devil !

DE WARRENNE *(drawing his sword)*. Have at you for a
meddling popinjay !

(PYRAMUS draws and they fight. Suddenly the LEGATE comes out of the Abbey.)

THE LEGATE. Put up your swords ! ' This is a holy place
And life a holy thing. Put up, de Warenné !
What ? Must I blast you with anathema ?

(With an ill grace DE WARENNE sheathes his sword.)

THE LEGATE. . Now get you gone.

(DE WARENNE goes.)

THE LEGATE. Was it for her, my son ?

Nay, nay, I know it.

DENIS PYRAMUS *(bitterly)*. You came not well, my lord—
I had hoped to have it deep !

THE LEGATE. Is it so bitter
To love so ?

DENIS PYRAMUS. It is always bitter, sir,
To love as poets love : we ache as others,
But we imagine, too, beyond the ache,
And have our torment double. . . .

THE LEGATE. Good my son,

I have a little dormitory-house,
A dormitory for the soul when tired :
It stands upon the hill at Rye, and rooks
Have builded their black nests upon the trees
About it, and the morning hours and the hours
Of evening there are spacious with the wind.
Go thither ; rest and dream ; dream and forget.
No answer ! Go. It is a charge I give thee.

*(DENIS PYRAMUS takes the LEGATE's hand, kisses his
Cardinal's ring, and takes leave. The LEGATE stands
a moment in a reverie, looking out upon the central plot
of sunny grass. As he turns to depart, KING HENRY
enters the Cloisters.)*

THE LEGATE. Ah, sire ! How fares your grace ?

KING HENRY. O Ottoboni,
If breath and sleep and waking are this life,
Why, then, I live !

(He seats himself moodily in one of the embrasures.)

KING HENRY. What do I else ? You see,
Lord Legate, what I am . . . a prisoner

Who has no gyves, a King who has no power.

And all I was my memory night and day!

THE LEGATE. And all you are? Are you not still God's servant?

Patience, my lord, is oft God's service, too.

KING HENRY. I am neither in a prison nor free; dethroned
Nor throned. I am nought. I am bowed to, not de-
ferred to;

My wishes are obeyed—not my commands.

Resolve me why God set me on a throne

To let me fall before mine enemies?

He is King of Heaven, yet in His earthly sway

Shows His archangels and His seraphim

How kings before rebellion may go down!

THE LEGATE. He has His uses for you, royal son.

KING HENRY. Uses? My life is green with pool-scum!
Uses!

THE LEGATE. Are you not here, in this great Abbey, sire,
A builder to His glory? Pillars, arches,
And delicate traceries, and that glimmering shrine,
Mosaiced, of St. Edward the Confessor——

KING HENRY (*waking from his moodiness*). Villainous souls
for less have been reprieved

From Hell, and I—I have not sinned deeply, Legate.

So do I hope to wear a majesty

Beyond my kingdom's in the day to come

When, dead, I yet shall live. I am a poet,

A troubadour whose canzons are of stone:

Arch rhymes to arch and flying groin to groin,

And, pillar after pillar, the refrains

Run through the modulations of the hymn

My hands rear to St. Peter and the Christ!

(*A look of ecstasy has settled upon his troubled face, but
it is suddenly dissolved by the sight of SIMON DE
MONTFORT, who comes out of the Chapter House.*)

KING HENRY. Simon, whence comest thou? What dost
thou there

In the Abbot's Chapter House?

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

We sit in council.

KING HENRY. We? Who?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My liege, the Parliament of England.

KING HENRY. Sir, what of me? Has England's King no voice

In England's Council Chamber? I forget—

I am here an eagle in a golden cage,

And thou an eagle on the mountain-top!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. An eagle with a humble heart, my lord.

KING HENRY (*rising*). But an imperial flight! Was I not worth

A summons even? Have I no royal love

Unto my people? Am I all so black

That I may not set one touch to the plough

Wherewith my England's soil is broken up

To hold to-morrow's seed?

SIMON DE MONTFORT.

O good my lord,

Had you but oftener spoke as now you speak,

With kingly lovingkindness toward your people,

We had not been drawn to battle. Come, my liege,

Enter with me among your councillors,

Summoned—believe it—in your royal name,

And take the high seat there; and I will stand

Before you as the meanest in your realm

And do you honour for your kingliness.

KING HENRY. What! Sit in thy seat, where thouapest me?

By God's head, thou mayst set my dead corpse there

But not my living body! Thou vile traitor!—

Nay, not a word; I will not have thee speak.

I am yet that much thy King! I go within

Unto my builders. Build thou for this land

What stall for kine thou wilt; I build for God.

(The KING goes angrily into the Abbey.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. His heart is as a tally in the Pyx,

A clear account; but mine a crabbéd bond

As with a usurous and cunning Jew. . . .

THE LEGATE (*with a whimsical smile*). 'Tis pity, good my lord, you are not a poet :
They who are steadfast to the muse's call
Can the easier trifle with the call of life.
I have a house of rest : alas, my son,
My hospitality were yours in vain.
'Tis pity, verily, you are not a poet !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. There was a brown-haired girl at Fiesole ;

It was the plague that took her—not the world. . . .
No, not the world, my wife, no, not the world. . . .

(*The LEGATE, with a sigh, moves towards the door into the Abbey. HENRY DE HASTINGS comes swiftly out of the Chapter House. The LEGATE enters the Abbey.*)

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Sir, they grow restless on this matter of ransom.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. It is not stomachable to me, de Hastings,

They should ask ransom for the prisoners
Who fell to us at Lewes—their English brothers,
For whose weal they took arms and shed their blood.
It is unworthy our confederacy !

HENRY DE HASTINGS. The Bishop of Worcester——

(*WALTER DE CANTILUPE and the other Ecclesiastics are leaving the Chapter House.*)

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. Churchmen, good my lord,
Who took no prisoners, can but twiddle thumbs
In yonder ; we were bidden, so we deemed,
For mightier work, regenerative counsel
Touching the good of England : we mistook !
Summon us, Earl, to-morrow, and you will find us
Within our bishoprics, where lie at wait
Immediate matters worthier of our zeal.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Now, Bishop, Bishop. . . .

WALTER DE CANTILUPE.

Sir ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*angrily*). Well, get you gone !

(*The Ecclesiastics go.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I must within. I should have not
come forth,

But, had I stayed, my heart-strings had been burst
With keeping in my wrath !

HENRY DE HASTINGS. There is no need ;
Here come they forth themselves.

*(With a buzz as of unfinished argument the Barons come
from the Chapter House, followed, rather sheepishly, by
the Commons, who keep apart.)*

NORFOLK. Yes, by the Rood !
Speak for us, noble Gloucester.

GLOUCESTER. Hear me, Leicester.
I say we shall have ransom for those knights
We took at Lewes, be it your will or no.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. My will or no : well, good. I see
you now

For what you are. Be it my will or no :
Good. And what more ? For, Gloucester, by your
eyes

I see that there is yet a word unsaid.

GLOUCESTER. My lord, your pardon : 'tis not to our minds
That you should have dominion absolute
Over this kingdom longer, and usurp—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Gloucester !

GLOUCESTER. —what is an Englishman's place.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Usurp !

HEREFORD. You are a Frenchman, Leicester ; 'tis not meet
A Frenchman should rule England.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Then, Sir Earl,
It was not meet a Frenchman should have fought
For England's liberties ! And you forget :
My mother's mother was an Englishwoman.

NORFOLK. We will not brook your rule.

GLOUCESTER. Resign your place
As head of this confederacy, de Montfort.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. To whom ? To you ?

GLOUCESTER. As Grosseteste did appoint !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. As Grosseteste. . . . Sir ?

GLOUCESTER. That day when he was turned
From court—that day when you were banished, too—
He said, and looked me deeply in the face,
That England cried out for a man. . . .

HENRY DE HASTINGS (*pointing to DE MONTFORT*). She found
him!

GLOUCESTER. That was to me as his induction of me
Into an office—to be England's man.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You have wakened late to your high
splendours, Gloucester!

GLOUCESTER. I have wakened, good my lord, I trust, in time.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. To cart away the tree my axe cut
down!

What if my axe strike now at lesser trees?

GLOUCESTER. There is no force in windy parables.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. But there is force, sir, in my twenty
castles,

My thirty thousand knights and men-at-arms,
And in my sovran captaincy!

GLOUCESTER. You threaten?

HEREFORD. Hark to the Frenchman, how he threatens us!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I am liberty's warrior here and
liberty's regent.

Till liberty's cause be won. So look to it!

Ransom? I say you shall not have it. No!

By the arm of St. James, have all of you turned Jews?

GLOUCESTER. No more than you, de Montfort, have turned
King!

(*ELEANOR comes out of the Abbey. She stops in the
shadow, listening and watching.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*to the Commons*). Go back unto your
shires and country towns,

And in your market-places stand and tell

How England's barons wrought in your behalf;

Shout from your roofs how, when they should have
pored,

As with one eye, on freedom's businesses

They glanced aside after the lure of moneys

And prated but of ransom, ransom, ransom. . . .
I am sickened to the heart.

(Suddenly comes DE WARRENNE.)

DE WARRENNE. My lords, my lords—

GLOUCESTER. How now, de Warrenne?

DE WARRENNE. Prince Edward has escaped
From Hereford.

GLOUCESTER (*ruminatingly*). Edward. . . .

DE WARRENNE. Under the pretence
Of races he tired out his keepers' horses,
Then, mounting a fresh steed, rode swift for Wales ;
They were too blown to follow. He is gone
To raise an army on the western marches
And in his father's name to swoop upon you.

GLOUCESTER (*to DE MONTFORT*). Sir, shall we have our
ransoms?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. God's eyes, no !

GLOUCESTER. Then who of you, my lords, will ride with me
Under the summer sun and summer moon
Upon the road for Wales ?

NORFOLK. Norfolk for one !

HEREFORD. And Hereford for another !

DIVERS BARONS. And I ! And I !
Away ! Away !

GLOUCESTER. Look to your power, Earl Simon ;
It soon shall crumble like a wall of sand !
We go to make a league with princely Edward.
Come, de Valence ! You shall be bosomed with me. . . .
Farewell—till battle-time !

*(He goes, and the Barons depart with him. SIMON DE
MONTFORT is left with HENRY DE HASTINGS and the
COMMONS.)*

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*calmly but swiftly*). Go to your shires
And summon to my banner all fit men ;
Assemble with your speediest diligence
At Stratford-upon-Avon. De Hastings, ride
Forthwith to Kenilworth ; spare not the spur.
Levy my utmost following thereabouts.

I will be with you at the moon's last quarter.
Commons of England, keep ye of good heart :
We have fought this fight before, and won it, too,
And, with God's grace, shall win it yet again !

ONE OF THE COMMONS. God have you in His keeping, good
my lord ;

You are a righteous man.

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*laying his hand on the other's shoulder*).
I thank thee, friend.

And now, farewell ! See to my bidding straight !

(*DE HASTINGS and the COMMONS depart. SIMON DE
MONTFORT seats himself heavily in one of the em-
brasures. ELEANOR comes forward.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I think the soul must gather up the
tares

Of tragic life and garner them apart
Against the famine of the spirit to come,
To feed us then with terror and terrible fear,
Lest faith be found too easy a path to Heaven !

ELEANOR. Simon—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Who is it ? Thou ? Hast come
from Mass ?

ELEANOR. I am come from prayer at the Confessor's tomb.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Ludlow will be their base, or Wig-
more Castle—

The Mortimers are my foes and Edward's liegemen.

ELEANOR. Simon, I watched and heard, there from the
shadow.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Why, that was well—to watch a
traitor's downfall !

ELEANOR. It was thy triumph !

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*starting up*). Thou mockest !
Woman, woman,

By what camp-fires have I not ached for thee !

ELEANOR (*softly*). Thy triumph, thy triumph ! 'Tis come
into my heart—

I know not how to tell its coming in.

'Twas with no tabard-pomp, nor heralds' blare,

But beautifully, like a summer rain
In the pale dawn at bird-wake.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. . . . They will skirt
The Severn and the Wye. How many bridges?

ELEANOR. Let us across the Thames to Southwark, Simon ;
In one's own house counsel is more at home.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Get thee to Southwark, Eleanor, an
thou wilt.

ELEANOR. Stride not about ; be patient. Ah, I know
We who have sown no patience can but reap
Impatience ; yet for but a pin-head while—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. On the Cinque Ports I can rely.
Say on.

They will protect me in the south—from France,
And Louis meddling for the rights of Kings !—
While I give battle in the midland west
To Edward. Well ? I hearken.

ELEANOR. . . . Nay, but sit.
How can I speak my whole soul out—God's Mother !—
While thus thou art restless, pacing to and fro
And murmuring to thyself ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. . . . Thy soul ? Sit ? Aye,
To hear thy soul outspoken to a traitor.

ELEANOR. Thou wrongest me, indeed.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. . . . That was thy word.

ELEANOR. Bent swords may be re-smithied to their
temper ;

Is there no hammer and anvil for the heart ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What, Eleanor ?

ELEANOR. . . . Hast thou never seen a child
Come to its mother shy with pretty tears
For naughtiness foregone ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. . . . I have seen a hound
Come back to heel !

ELEANOR (*passionately*). . . . Wert thou a Ghibelline
Ere this thou hadst slain me !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. . . . Llewellyn is my friend ;
I will speed letters. Twenty thousand Welsh
At Edward's rear will be a thunderbolt.

ELEANOR. Look at me, prithee ! O my fiery falcon,

Be tethered to my wrist but while I speak—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What, by a little jewelled chain ?
God's mercy !

ELEANOR. Thou who wouldst hear thy meanest man-at-arms

On this or that presumed injustice, Simon—

Wilt thou not hear thy wife in such a cause

As, if 'twere lost, would drain the sun of fire ?

Immortal hearts here topple to a doom

Beyond the legendary fates of realms :

Lost power is lost but by the loser of it,

'Tis gained by fortune ; and doffed crowns are donned

By younger kings ; but fallen ecstasies

Lie in the dust for ever ! Simon, Simon,

I know thy glory better than thyself :

Thy work is done and an imperial morrow

Will shoot it on through Time ; but this our love,

And all the joy of it on earth, is shot

For one brief flight, then, like an arrow, drops—

We know not where.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What dost thou in my camp

After so long a sojourn with my foes ?

There was a spy of thy sex caught at Lewes !

ELEANOR (*softly*). To voice my pride I first must break my
pride . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. O daughter of the House Plan-
tagenet,

Thy pride !

ELEANOR. My pride—in—thee ! There, it is broken—

My pride, my pride . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Within my eyes have men

Beheld a fire : they said it was the fire

Of the great cause of Liberty here alight

Within my eyes, and followed as I were

A seraph, or a Moses with the Law.

May God assoil me, but the fire that burned

Was my despair ! Of victory ? No—of thee !

The well of my sustainment was run dry.

ELEANOR. I know, I know ! It is my Purgatory.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. In exile, in the camp at Brescia
With the Emperor, and in my bannered tent
In Gascony, no hour of sun or torch
Passed by but I did sing *Magnificat*
That God had wrought the love between us twain.

ELEANOR. And I at home—was I less passionate ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. God's body, nay, I know not—but I
know

I did not hear the storm that smote my ship,
So loudly beat the heart that hastened back
To lie once more on thine !

ELEANOR. Oh, as it did !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By Termagant, I found such moil
and broil

As broke all truce with life ! I have spent myself
In sweat, in blood, as that great trumpet bade
Which rang from England's sufferings—and for what ?
To be called traitor by the one I love,
Usurper by my friends ! That trumpet's sound
Thou, Eleanor, a woman, didst never hear !—
My woman of women !

ELEANOR. Oh, wouldst thou break my heart ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What might we not, together, have
achieved

Against the world's vast, old and weary pain ?

ELEANOR. There is the morrow yet.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. It is too late.

Alone I won that which I won ; alone

Let me or win again or lose it all.

I will not share the splendour of my soul—

No, not with thee !

ELEANOR. I will go home, my lord,
And teach an orison to our children's tongues,
And bid them pray well for their father's cause—
And for their mother's cause a little, too !

(*She turns to go.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I would clasp fire for thee ! Ah, go
not thus !

The vilest murderer doomed beneath my writ
Did never kill what I was like to kill.
I pray thy pardon from my very heart !
Give me thy hands to kiss !

ELEANOR. No, not my hands ;
No, Simon, no ! I would not have your kiss.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. But, Eleanor, tears ?—tears are the
ambassadors

Of good words to be spoken.

ELEANOR (*weeping*). Why was I born ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Who will acquit us of these months
and years

We have given up to desolation, we
Who so magnificently and sweetly loved,
Spinning from kiss to kiss great webs of life ?

ELEANOR. But it was you, you and your solemn heart
That would not read my eyes. And now I hate you !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By the arm of St. James, then hate
me—but I love thee

More than I ever loved thee, loving now
Out of the wisdom of a sorrow deeper
Than holy water may drip down to cleanse !

ELEANOR (*bitterly*). It is the woman who must come at call !
Some quake of the earth should reave men of their
foothold

And lordly balance, then the new'st-born gnat
With his frail, little, imperceptible wings,
Could at their fall laugh loud—and they, forsooth,
God's image and the summit of creation !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Get thee to Southwark ere we
quarrel, wife.

ELEANOR (*adventuringly*). I said you were a traitor : so you
were.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Take heed, take heed ; if not of
royal race

I have a royal wrath. No more, no more !

ELEANOR (*biting her lip*). God mend you for a serious fool :
you are lost

In the ambush of a very woman, Simon !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. There is no reasoning with thee in a mood.

Get thee to Southwark !

ELEANOR. At my lord's good pleasure.

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*turning wearily away*). I would I had never seen the flaming vision

Of Liberty, nor heard the summoning trumpet

That Justice blew ! As well be but a child

Who follows moths : if he succeed, 'tis nothing !

ELEANOR (*after a pause, half tenderly*). Thou art over-wearied . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I could pray to lose :

'Twere nothing, bettered by an end to all.

ELEANOR. Why does a woman tempt and dare a man

Beyond the timely bourn of hazard, Simon ?

We tremble as we do it—yet we do it.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What is it in thy voice that troubles me

As when I first did woo and thou wert sweet ?

ELEANOR. What are these beggarly barons to thy greatness,

Victor of Lewes ? Thy power is mighty yet,

And one swift march, directed with thy skill,

Shall quench their vile defection straight. Have out !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. This, Eleanor, from thee ?

ELEANOR. Do not despair.

Thou art wearied only ; take of me what strength

A woman can give her man.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Could I believe !

Too many yesterdays thou hast been my foe.

ELEANOR. What, must I conquer pride in one day twice ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. How do I know thou art not thy brother's spy ?

Could I believe ! For then were Cæsar's world

A bubble beside mine !

ELEANOR. Believe, believe !

Have we not battled with each other's soul

Beyond the endurance of our memories ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. A coat of mail is tested ere 'tis worn

Upon the heart. Could I but test thee, too,
Ere to my heart I take thee !

(Out of the Abbey comes KING HENRY.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. God's eyes, I will !
Here comes thy brother. Thou shalt understand—
If never yet till now thou hast understood—
The traitor that thy husband is ! *(Calling.)* Who
waits ?

(Three knights in full mail come from the Chapter House.)

ONE OF THE THREE. My lord ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I know you ; good. Arrest the King.
*(SIMON DE MONTFORT narrowly watches his wife as the
knights move to obey.)*

KING HENRY. Blood will not wash away the anointing oil
That sealed me God's. I am panoplied against you,
Traitors, profaners !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Bear him to the Tower !
He shall ride out with me into the wars
Against his son. Away !

(The knights, with the KING, go.)

ELEANOR. At Odiham Castle
I have a force no captain would despise :
Where shall it join thy march ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(darkly)*. Dost thou not fear
For Henry's life in such a traitor's hands ?
Why should I not attempt the crown itself ?

ELEANOR. Because thou art thou, my Simon ! Come : to
Southwark.

We will show Henry—and the barons, too—
How to save England from their little selves !

(With a great cry SIMON takes his wife into his arms.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. So are we twain one fire, my wife,
my love !

ACT V

The Bell Tower of Evesham Abbey.

It is a square landing in the belfry. To the spectator's right the wide wooden stairs descend squarely into the depths of the building ; to his left they ascend correspondingly. In the centre of the platform, fenced with a low wooden rail, is the gaping square of a shaft in which hang the great bells, four in number, of green bronze ; and, above them, the chains, cranks, ropes and other machinery of their fixture and handling, extending up the shaft in a vast irregular network, concealing the ascending stairway as it turns abruptly to the right, out of view. The platform between the two flights is, in consequence of the shaft, much narrowed. At the foot of the left-hand flight is a door giving on to a small stone gallery. The walls are of stone, damp and mildewed, broken here and there by windows, some crazily shuttered, others unbarred. The bright August sunlight, filtering between these apertures and rising, dimly and dustily, through the shaft from the church beneath, sheds a green tone upon the massive woodwork, while through the windows the sweltering countryside can be seen quivering in the golden heat. The place has the cool oppressiveness of the depth of a disused well on a sultry day.

Ascending from the church beneath comes SIR REGINALD DE WARRENNE, in full mail.

DE WARRENNE (*whispering down*). Come, Margoth ! Margoth !

(MARGOTH, *also in full mail, comes up from below.*)

DE WARRENNE. Up by yonder stairs !
God's sweat, but it is hot ! There brews a storm.
There is a cell, or chamber, over this
Whence we can hear—but we must make no noise.
King Henry's rescue from de Montfort's hands
Lies in the silent deftness of our wits.

MARGOTH. I will be as a mouse beneath a leaf
When lovers tread the glade . . .

DE WARRENNE. Up!—for they come.

(They disappear up the stairs leading above. After a moment the belfry is thronged by the entrance of SIMON DE MONTFORT and his chief captains and knights. In attendance is NICHOLAS.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Here is the scroll, Despensers, of
your charge ;

Here, Basset, yours. Be you but diligent
In their effecting and we all shall smile
At sunset, with our faces to the foe,
And they in flight before us. You, de Hastings,
Marshal our centre as I bade. Our levies
From Kenilworth should cuff Prince Edward's flank—
And turn it, too!—within an hour from this.
Their succouring banners should be well in sight
Before these bronze mouths shout again. This helm
Sits loosely on me, Nicholas. There, take it.
Pad it about the temples with a kerchief.

(ELEANOR enters, in company with WALTER DE CANTILUPE and ROGER BACON.)

ELEANOR. With mine, good Nicholas—this.

(She hands him her kerchief.)

ELEANOR. My lord, my husband—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What, thou here—and a battle
smouldering up ?

ELEANOR. Has ever yet Plantagenet shunned battle ?

WALTER DE CANTILUPE. After the celebration of the Mass
Before your army, sir, I went apart
To pray, and met the Countess' cavalcade
Riding into the camp, and brought her hither.

ELEANOR *(touching BACON's sleeve)*. Our monkish wizard
here has spirited me
Under his friendly guidance, an esquire
Of wisdomed courtesy. He has often smiled
To cheer me on the way, and has but sighed

A little for his books and crucibles
At his loved Oxford and from which I tore him
Irreverently, like a very woman !
I thank his sacrifice with all my heart.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The best philosopher is the kindly
man ;

I thank thee, friar and friend !

(ROGER BACON and the BISHOP go apart together and
stand looking out through one of the half-shuttered
windows.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. And you, Sir Knights,
Await my summons on the floor below !

(The knights go down from the belfry by the stairs to the
right. NICHOLAS goes by the door leading to the small
stone gallery.)

ELEANOR. I could not stay from thee in this thine hour
Of the reached eyrie or the swallowing tarn.
How fare thy hopes ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Full bloom upon the bough.
What shall I bring thee to our eyrie home
Out of my flight through lightning and the winds ?

ELEANOR. Only thy heart—and thy forgiveness, Simon.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Speak not the word forgiveness, for
that says

We have remembrance of our sadnesses
When we should have no memory here at all,
Have nothing, nothing in the world save only
The beauty now of our immediate love.

ELEANOR. This love that is our own and never another's,
Ours from the sunrise to the sunset's droop,
Ours to the last hem of the dragged day !

(KING HENRY, in surcoat and mail but unhelmeted, comes
up from the church below.)

KING HENRY. Have I, King Simon, strayed from out my
cage

Too far ? Or am I suffered in God's House,
I, His anointed ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. In the House of God ?
Why, yes. And in your own house, too, my liege,
When that is set in order.

KING HENRY. Is it thou,
Sister ?

ELEANOR. This is my honourable place,
Beside my husband, Henry.

KING HENRY. Tell me, Bishop :
Was Abel stricken by a brother—or sister ?

(The KING goes apart to DE CANTILUPE and ROGER BACON, and at the same moment NICHOLAS returns hurriedly.)

NICHOLAS *(quietly)*. My lord—my lord—

SIMON DE MONTFORT. What is it, Nicholas ?

NICHOLAS. There is—indeed, my lord, I am sure I heard
A noise o'erhead of someone moving there.
My ears are good.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. By the arm of St. James, who spies ?
Go, call my knights ; and rout the villain forth.

(NICHOLAS goes to the head of the stairs and softly whistles down. The knights re-enter. NICHOLAS, with his finger on his lips, leads them up the other stairs. There is the sound of a brief struggle and then they return, bearing with them DE WARRENNE and MARGOTH as prisoners.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Judas de Warrenne, I do remember
you !

DE WARRENNE. Did I not say you should, my lord of
Leicester ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Who is your fellow there ? Hold up
your face.

You, too, I do remember—in the mill
At Lewes. Are you not a woman ?

MARGOTH. Yes.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Your name is Margoth ?

MARGOTH. Yes.

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(to ELEANOR)*. This was the spy

Of thy sex caught at Lewes ! I let her go.

(He turns to the others.)

Unloose that belt of knighthood from the man ;
Strike off his spurs. At sunset see him hanged !

DE WARENNE. I am in the presence of my King and yours ;
'Tis he alone has power upon my life.

Into his hands I do commit myself.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The royal seal is mine. My acts,
de Warenne,

Beneath that seal are law ; but 'tis the law
Of battle that condemns you—for a spy.

DE WARENNE *(desperately)*. King, succour me, your servant,
taken here

In your behoof ! I came to bring you rescue
And bear you to your royal son.

KING HENRY *(first arrogantly, then weakly)*. De Montfort,
Release my servant ! Simon, let him go . . .

Sir Earl, in God's name . . . Will you not, de Mont-
fort,

Release my knight and servant ?

DE WARENNE. Oh, the world

Is all at odds and gambols in the space

When kings to subjects turn petitioners !

I am for the tree ! Hell take you, King and all !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. See them both hanged at sunset,
after battle.

ELEANOR *(to MARGOTH)*. I like thy face ; pucker it knows,
and tears.

MARGOTH. Lady, I am a wind upon the heath,

A wind that passes in the night, so quick—

You cannot hold it. But it will die down,

They say, at sunset.

ELEANOR. I will not think thee vile ;

No—I had sisters ! Hast thou any lover

To care for thee ?

MARGOTH. I hope I am never seen

Of lover again !

ELEANOR. So bitter—and so young ?

MARGOTH. So young—and so despoiled ! Is there a love
That does not make ashamed ?

ELEANOR. Thou piteous chuck,
Thou shalt not die—so empty a silver vase
And love so pure a flower ! My lord, this girl—
Give her to me ; in this good moment here
That is our own and never another's, and never
Shall even be ours again, give her to me !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Can I deny thee, sweetest, at thy
sweetest ?

Thy will shall be my writ.

ELEANOR. Oh, listen, Margoth !

MARGOTH. Is there some trap ? I have seen she-foxes
trapped,

And innocent eyes they had !

ELEANOR (*laughing*). My pretty vixen !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. For you, de Warenne, no, I have no
grace.

DE WARRENNE. I would not at your wife's hands have it—I,
Who have had her lips !

ELEANOR. You had their outward skin,
Never their inward breath !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Answer him not !

I once had speech with a wise Cardinal
And a young poet who was my enemy, yet,
Even so, my friend. Some men can speak to men.
One of you, take him down ; await my word.

(*One of the knights accompanies DE WARRENNE below.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*as he takes his wife's hand and kisses it*).
Had never poet spoken, it were thus !

HENRY DE HASTINGS (*from one of the windows*). Despenser,
Basset, look ! What light is yon,
There in the sky ?—a long light, like a lance.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Where ?

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Yonder, sir, above that clump of elms.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Indeed, 'tis strange ! How burning
red it glows !—

A ruby molten into streaming fire.

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Is it—my senses reel even as I ask—
A flaming sign from Heaven?

KING HENRY (*crossing himself frantically*). The Day of
Doom!

The Judgment Day!

ELEANOR. How pale we all do look!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. What do you think, Lord Bishop?
Is it a sign?

ELEANOR. Is it an angel flying hitherward,
The herald of the Christ to come on clouds?

ROGER BACON. Be not disturbed, it is a comet, lady;
It was foretold by an Arabian.

'Twas generate of Mars when Mars was housed
In Taurus, and arose itself in Cancer,
And ceases not to yearn to Mars its sire,
Hence wars and discords and the wraths of men.

KING HENRY (*ecstatically*). The King of Kings speaks to an
earthly King!

It is a sign to me from God my liege—

He will uphold me yet! Simon, beware!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. The blazing lance of God! It is an
omen

Of victory! Aye, a sign from Heaven, a sign!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Oh, who am I that God should send
me omens?

No, no; comets would go on pilgrimage

Whether I won or lost. But, good de Hastings,

Your eagled eye of warriorship is dazed

To blindness by your lights and signs: and you

A captain prompt to see a vantage! Look—

The banners of my friends from Kenilworth!

KING HENRY (*mumbling*). God will uphold me yet, uphold
me yet!

HENRY DE HASTINGS. Now Edward Longshanks is a beaten
prince

Ere mace be swung or arrow loosed! My lord,

Did I not tell you 'twas a sign from Heaven?

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*pinching the other's ear*). As a wiseacre
weathercock will tell

Whence blows the wind, albeit so stiff with rust
Not even a storm would twirl it ! Give my horse
An apple, Nicholas. All is well, dear heart.
'Tis my last battle, in my bones I feel it :
'To Lewes' matins follow Evesham's vespers !
No more shall I go from thee to the wars,
But live my morrows in an English garden,
With quietness and roses all about,
And, past the garden's end, a happier folk,
Blessing my laws and this last battle's wounds.
Shall I not live in ballads ? Why, de Hastings,
Who knows but we shall hear in our old age
A wandering troubadour at Kenilworth
Singing our fortunes ?

(In the distance a trumpet sounds a long, lingering blast.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Edward moves to battle.
We are ready for the grip and we shall throw him.
And then—

*(His hand clasps and unclasps over his sword as he dreams
of the future. MARGOTH suddenly begins to sob where
she stands apart.)*

NICHOLAS *(hoarsely)*. My lord . . . the banners . . . look,
my lord.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. How now, my good chirurgon-
barber ?—friend,
Blood will be let to-day beyond thy cupping !—
What banners ?

NICHOLAS. Those from Kenilworth—and yet not those,
But those behind.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. I see the cognizance
Of Montfort and the . . . Now, by Termagant,
What mean the royal leopards at the back ?
Is it a snare ?

MARGOTH *(falling at SIMON's feet and clasping his knees)*.
A snare ! 'Tis the Earl of Gloucester.

He was despatched last night ; he took your castle ;
Your friends are all dispersed or prisoners ;
And the Earl was to display their captured banners

Thick in the vanward of his powers, come back
To take you unaware !

ELEANOR. Thy warrior's brain,
My Simon, will outwit that clumsy trick !
What is the stripling Edward 'gainst de Montfort ?
SIMON DE MONTFORT. By the arm of St. James, but they
come skilfully on !
It is not from themselves they learnt that order,
But me ; yes, it is I who taught thee, Edward.
And now let us commend our souls to God,
Our bodies are our enemies' !

ELEANOR. Simon !
SIMON DE MONTFORT. Wife,
I will not lie to thy magnificent heart :
'Tis verily so. Did I not, smiling, tell thee
'Twas my last battle ?

ELEANOR. Now I thank God's Mother
I came to thee this day !

KING HENRY. The sign from Heaven !
The sacred welfare of anointed kings
Is manifest ! Now glory in the height,
And in the depth be praise ! Lord Bishop, come !
I will to the altar, to my knees, my knees—
I am no Thomas, no, I am no Thomas !
If I despaired, O God, 'twas but one hour . . .
The Sacrament, give me the Sacrament !

*(The KING goes hurriedly down into the church below and
the BISHOP follows him.)*

ELEANOR. Take down unto my women, Nicholas,
This girl, and bid them use her, till I come,
With gentle kindness and sweet womanhood.

MARGOTH. I have lived among the winds too long to dwell
At quiet hearths. Will you not let me go,
Lady, back now into the winds ?

ELEANOR. I think
I shall not dwell at quiet hearths again !
We will go eat our bread among the winds
Together, Margoth . . .

NICHOLAS.

Come !

(NICHOLAS and MARGOTH go.)

HENRY DE HASTINGS.

Oh, good my lord,

Seek safety ; live ; live to avenge this field !

We will protect your going—'tis no flight,

For England needs her tower of strength. Sir, go !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. In wars have I grown old, and now
my life

Hastes to an end. Something within my blood

Tells me my fathers never fled, nor wished

To flee, from battle. Nay, but you, my friends,

Depart from me, lest in the flower of youth

You perish, and your lives be sacrificed

To my old honour and my pride of race,

Illustrious in the glory of war ! Depart !

(*They murmur in fierce refusal. NICHOLAS returns.*)

HENRY DE HASTINGS. By God, sir, no ! That is no fair
behest.

Is there a treason deeper than desertion ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Reach me your hands, one after one,
my captains.

Never will I surrender unto dogs

And perjurers ; only to God alone.

Now to your places and your squadrons ! Blow

My trumpet when our ranks are set. Amen !

(HENRY DE HASTINGS and the other knights and captains
go.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT (*to NICHOLAS*). Give her my helm :
then, as thou goest down,

Bid them send up the prisoner de Warenne,

Without a guard. Come, Eleanor, help me on,

And arm my body as thou dost my soul.

(NICHOLAS hands the helm to ELEANOR and quietly departs.)

ELEANOR (*simply*). I have never done this service to thee,
Simon,

Before ; and now I shall not do it to thee

Ever again.

(*A lark can be heard singing in the sky.*)

ELEANOR. Listen : it is the lark.
Would not a minstrel, singing of this hour,
Tell how a raven croaked the while we kissed
And bade farewell ? And yet it is the lark !
Is it God mocking us ?—or blessing us
With joyous beauty, shedding on our souls
The thrilling blossoms of the heavenliest song
That laughs into the sunlight ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Blessing us,
As me He has blessed with thee !

ELEANOR. I will awhile
Go pray. I will not send thee forth, my Simon,
With tears, but prayers. Before thy trumpet sound
I will come up again. .

*(She goes down. ROGER BACON comes forward from the
stone gallery where he has remained in contemplation of
the scene without.)*

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Philosopher,
What canst thou fashion from this broken web ?

ROGER BACON. That policies are brief and Science is long ;
That Time itself must gradually grow
And cannot be compelled ; that fools can sap
Wise men's foundations. Is there any folk
Worth a great man to lead them ? What is power ?
Study how to be ruled, not how to rule ;
To die, not live.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. To die : the going forth
Against a granite darkness none may cleave,
None scale, none wear away with all Time's drops
Nor all the whole world's tears ; and one may beat
Incessant hands against the infrangible stone
From æon unto æon, and all the roar
Reverberate down and down into the Gulf
Till all the fibres of Eternity
Quiver and jangle, but no block will yield.
If but we could be sure that past the wall
There are fresh pathways for our feet to tread,
And hands to clasp again !

ROGER BACON.

Blind-hearted mortals,

After so many ages of ascent,
Birth-pangs and passionings of the wing-torn worm,
Dumb aspirations heavy-wombed with song,
Are ye no wiser yet? Still dare ye deem
That it is your will, your loves, your desires
Which Time shall pleasure when the flames of the end
Burn at the haggard bourns? 'That 'tis your hopes
The long Hereafter shall fulfil, not God's?
We are but the younger brother of the winds,
The seas, the stars, the grasses and the stones.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. There was a Syrian alchemist at the court

Of the Emperor. I learnt from him that Heaven
Is not the garnering of the pale grain, men,
But God alone in ecstasy with Himself.

ROGER BACON (*particularly interested*). A Syrian, say you?
And an alchemist?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The Life Eternal—so this Syrian taught,

One night of stars—is but the faring back
To the Creative Impulse, there to dwell
In that transcendent Glory which is Power,
The Power to do, to weave the cosmic robe,
To make, unmake and remake—what? Ourselves!

(DE WARRENNE, *unattended, comes up.*)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Truth does both comfort and discomfort me.

Farewell!

ROGER BACON. Thou art one with Nature's spin-whirl, son,
And goest hence into the loom of saps

To weave thy soul's new robe. Fare onward well!

(*He goes. There is a low growl of thunder in the distance.*)

DE WARRENNE. Wouldst hang me with a bell-rope? I should toll

My own black doom and save the sexton's pence!

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Thou troublest me. Thou wouldst not understand

My trouble, mercenary. 'Tis enough

Thou troublest me, death's shadow on my spurs.
So get thee gone !

DE WARRENNE. My lord ?

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Get thee away !

I owe thee somewhat : ricks of thy vile firing
First set myself afire 'gainst such as thou,
To England's weal to-morrow. But 'tis not that . . .
Get thee away !

(He turns and goes to one of the windows and looks out. A flash of lightning hisses into the belfry, flickering along the bells ; a crash of thunder follows.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Sends Heaven in very truth
Alarum of signs and omens ? Lights and lightnings
And battailous thunders : strange and marvellous !
My heart is loud with storm ; I am akin
To tempest. Shout, O comet, shout ! I hear,
And when the sunset bleeds into the night
Will follow thee !

DE WARRENNE. I am the King's man, traitor !
This for the King !

(He springs at DE MONTFORT and grapples with him, his hand drawing the Earl's dagger from its sheath at the girdle. DE MONTFORT seizes his wrist and they struggle in the confined space.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT. You hireling wolf !

(In their struggle they crash against the low wooden rail surrounding the bell-shaft ; this bursts asunder and gives way ; DE WARRENNE loses his foothold.)

DE WARRENNE *(as he crashes down the shaft)*. God ! . . .
God ! . . .

(Falling, he makes wild attempts to clutch at the bell-ropes and the bells terribly and spasmodically jangle and clang. Into the dread silence that ensues break lightning and thunder. As the peal dies away KING HENRY and ELEANOR return up into the belfry, pale and aghast.)

SIMON DE MONTFORT *(furiously to the KING)*. 'Twas you,
King, fed yon shattered mercenary

And all his dastard tribe ! His hire is paid.
But who will pay his master ? Why should kings
Never pay scot ? God's eyes, I could turn Brutus !

KING HENRY (*cowering away*). From boyhood have I feared
the thunderstone,
But more do I fear you !

. . . (*As they stand face to face a trumpet sounds shrilly below.*)

ELEANOR. Thy trumpet, Simon !

O Mother of God, of many thousand hours
This is the last of wonderful hand in hand.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Look to my wife, your sister. On
your soul !

KING HENRY (*haughtily*). She is my sister, Earl.

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Do me one grace :

Henceforth in all things, great or little, sire,
Lean on your son. I prophesy a king
Not of a kingdom only but of men !
Bear him a dead man's homage and his love,
Aye, and his blessing, too. Dear heart, farewell !
I will keep Lenten fast at God's own board
Until thou comest to me there. Wife, wife,
Kiss long our children for me. Teach them, too,
I was a lover of man and not a traitor.

KING HENRY. I shall be King again—be King again !

ELEANOR. It was the lark and not the raven sang
About us, Simon—not the raven, no,
The lark, the joyous lark !

SIMON DE MONTFORT. The last kiss—

ELEANOR. Take—

Oh, take ! Could I but give my life-breath now,
Thus . . . Simon . . .

SIMON DE MONTFORT. Eleanor . . .

(*Their farewell is in their eyes and their breathed names,
and SIMON DE MONTFORT goes down into the church
below. His mailed feet can be heard ringing, step by
step, down, down. His horse neighs below as he emerges.
The thunder growls more in the distance.*)

KING HENRY.

Mine enemy

Is taken in the pitfall ! I will build
An oratory here. Strike, falchions, strike !
Whirr, arrows, whirr ! 'To-morrow—nay, now, now
I am England's King again !

ELEANOR.

I will not look,

Not look ! I will remember just his eyes,
His eyes that loved.

KING HENRY (*at one of the windows.*) Smite down our
enemies, Edward !

Son, smite the traitors to the dust !

SOLDIERY (*shouting below.*)

Earl Simon !

Earl Simon !

(The trumpet sounds once more, a short blast, answered by a longer note far off ; then SIMON DE MONTFORT is heard galloping away into battle. ELEANOR has fallen to her knees in prayer. Suddenly the bells begin to sound the hour, with a wild and resonant clamour. The whole belfry throbs with their tumult and their swaying. The KING, beside himself at the thought of his approaching triumph, almost chants his fierce joy into the clamour of the great bells.)

KING HENRY.

Heaven has borne me witness ! Sound,
Bronze bells ! Shake out the tresses of your noise
And blind the sun with scarlet clamour ! Peal !
Leap up in brazen flames of ravening clang !
I am King ! Mine enemies are cast down ! I am King !
Blazon it forth unto the comet of God !

(The brief thunderstorm has passed and a flood of brilliant sunlight streams into the belfry as the bells cease swinging. In the distance can be heard the sounds of battle, the clash of weapons and the death-agonies of men.)

1917-19.

VITERBO

Lettera di S. S. Pontefice Gregorio XIII.

del 15. di Aprile 1622.

Al Signor Don Giovanni de' Medici.

Religioso di S. Maria della

Trinità in Roma.

Il Signor Don Giovanni de' Medici.

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CHARACTERS

EDWARD THE FIRST, *King of England.*

LLEWELLYN, *Prince of Wales.*

ELEANOR, *widow of Simon de Montfort.*

ALIANORE, *her daughter.*

A NUN.

VITERBO

SCENE : *The Gardens of the Dominican Nunnery at Montargis, France.*

It is a high-walled sunk close, unevenly paved with mossed flagstones. There is a small arch in the centre of the mural lateral facing the spectator, above a short flight of steps, giving on to the greater gardens visible beyond. In the middle of the close is a fountain, playing. It is a beautiful day in quite early spring.

ELEANOR *is seated in a carved oaken chair that has been placed for her near the fountain. ALIANORE is sitting on a leathern stool at her feet, reading to her from a vellum manuscript.*

ALIANORE. The Bears are glittering in the middle Heaven ;
The long waves murmur underneath the stars ;
And 'tis the new moon, Sirens, the new moon !
It drops a sickle-anchor in the sea,
And strange, mild voices linger on the wind.
'Tis the new moon : O Rudel, slack thy sails !

Thy voyage is over ; slack thy laurelled sails,
Pale troubadour ! No longer watch the Heaven
To set a Libyan course against the wind
By the intimate Pleiads and the garrulous stars !
To-night the Sirens sing upon the sea,
And the African fishers chant unto the moon.

She is more lovely than the lissom moon,
White Melisande, who saw thy slackened sails
From her enchanted terrace o'er the sea.
Lie down and sleep, and render thanks to Heaven,
Sick wanderer, that the sky is filled with stars
And man has taught him how to foil the wind !

To-morrow at the hour of silver wind
Thy princess, pacing softer than the moon
Paces along a corridor of stars,
Will come to where thou liest beneath thy sails.
Thou wilt awaken to her face, thy Heaven,
And to her hair, enmisted from the sea.

Hush your songs, Sirens, in the glowing sea !
The dawn's bronze portals swing wide to the wind,
And crimsoned heralds blare in the eastern Heaven.
The waves stir like a woman's breasts ; the moon,
A weary spirit, goes down behind thy sails,
Rudel, and but a memory are the stars.

She leans above thee and her eyes are stars
Greyer and greener than the green-grey sea
Where it is shadowed by the woven sails.
Her hair is blown about thee by the wind—
Sing this to-night, O Sirens, to the moon !—
And mouth burns down to mouth, and earth is Heaven.

Sirens, by Heaven, wherever poet sails
Beneath the moon across the treacherous sea
Love is the wind that drives him to the stars !

ELEANOR. That is enough, child.

ALIANORE.

Mother ?

ELEANOR.

Child, enough !

Love-songs are for thy youth, not for my age.
Read them unto thy lover, Prince Llewellyn,
When he returns from Italy with thy brothers—
The great Earl Simon's sons, in exile there,
With neither places nor appurtenances,
As had been theirs were England charitable,
And her new king, young Edward the Crusader,
Just to his cousins.

ALIANORE.

As yet he may be, mother.

ELEANOR. Alas, how we—who were so great a woman—
Are fallen, seeking charity of a king !

ALIANORE. It is to-day King Edward will ride hither—
So said his pursuivant.

ELEANOR. I loved the youth,
And Simon prophesied a royal man.

ALIANORE. Beshrew me, mother, but I love my cousin
Ere that I see him ! Richard Cœur-de-Lion
Will fright no more the naughty Saracen babes,
For Edward is the paladin-ogre now ;
And not their babes alone but their emirs
Tremble upon the whisper of his name !
I would I were a man—one such as he,
A knight, a king, a Lancelot—

ELEANOR. I will dream
That he is big of heart until I wake
To know how little ! But 'tis verily somewhat
That on his way from Palestine to England
He tarries for an hour upon my prayer.

ALIANORE. He will grant all you ask and make us happy.
I am sure upon it. 'Tis a fortunate day :
Look, how the sun is striding into spring,
And how the trees are clamorous with buds !

ELEANOR. To-night there may be frost, and then to-morrow
Will be a charnel-acre for such buds
As had a faith in sunlight ! I am too old
To look for summer in a snowdrop-bed !

(Breaking forth into a torrent of almost Sibylline speech.)

This world is but a north-wind's bordel-house !
O rape and servitude of youth ! O Years !
O bitter daily death of life's grey folk
Who do not die, but fester like an heap
Of autumn foliage fallen and not yet burned !
Rank generations that achieve no end
Save tears and such forlornness as cheats God
Of dutiful faith ! Perverse and mildewed grain,
Sown in the whirlwind, in Gehenna reaped,
And harvested in blasphemous granaries

Whose walls arose, not as did Troy's, with song,
 But with the mingled gnash and wail and scream
 That are the choir of Satan ! What is hope ?
 A young fool's folly ! What is vision ? Dust
 In the eyes and sudden crimson on the lids
 Close-shut against a stinging sun ! Go down
 Unto the sea, speak to the fishers' wives :
 There went ten boats away ; there came back nine !
 Go to the towns : a score rode to the wars ;
 There came back ten, and six of ten were maimed !
 Go into yonder nunnery : Love had sworn
 To come by springtime ; but upon his way
 There was an ambush set by Death ! God's eyes,
 It is not much that we can snatch from Time !
 A priest's sleek promises that fawn like hounds
 Upon credulity—what of them ? Skies
 Are colourless and lips are red no more !
 Hands yearn to hands long drifting in the tides,
 Hands bitten to the bone by cold sea-snakes.
 Ashes—what comfort is in ashes ? Fires
 That laughed in eyes that loved us are all strewn
 In thin white dust along the shapeless winds
 And choke the keyhole of Eternity !
 From hour to hour there is alone the hour,
 The hour that passes ; and the rose may fade
 And spill her leaves with every sand that drops !
 Dust unto dust, dust unto dust ! Child, child,
 Take hold on every moment with strong hands ;
 Death and division are the wolves of life,
 And prowl about us, swift to rob our hearts
 Of every sweet we have hoarded up from fate—
 Ah, God, even love ! Ah, God, even very love !

(A NUN enters from the upper gardens.)

THE NUN. Madam, his grace of England, the Lord Edward !

(KING EDWARD comes ; the NUN goes.)

KING EDWARD *(kissing his aunt's cheek)*. It is the nephew,
 not the king, who comes.

(*To ALIANORE, who has risen.*)

Fair cousin, I press my greeting on your hand
To seal the kinship mutual in our veins.

(*He kisses her hand.*)

ELEANOR. You find me like a fire in sunlight—quenched.

What would you more of fortune, conqueror?

KING EDWARD. Even such forbearance in the vanquished,
madam,

As makes forbearance in the victor wise!

(*They look at each other steadily.*)

ELEANOR (*to ALIANORE*). Go, child. This king and I must
speak alone.

KING EDWARD. Sweet cousin, I shall not ride from here
away

Before I have sought thee out to take my leave.

(*ALIANORE curtseys prettily and departs.*)

KING EDWARD. You did not beg, I think, my break of
travel

Here at Montargis for a tournament

Of splintering words.

ELEANOR. I am still Plantagenet:

Hot speech is in my bones. And yet forgive

One shaft, one shaft of bitterness—the last

Within the quiver of my lone, old life!

KING EDWARD. What would you, aunt?

ELEANOR. Be treated as the mother

Of two of England's princes!

KING EDWARD. Have the sons

Of traitors rights and privileges?

ELEANOR. Yes,

Edward, the rights and privileges of men

To live and thrive as men.

KING EDWARD. Those who have swords,

And hands and skill to use them, should not lack

Employment. There are Cypriote wars, and feuds

Between Italian cities . . .

ELEANOR. High employment
For grandsons of a king ! Have they no claim
On that king's house ?

KING EDWARD. But treason, like a tide,
Washed out their sandy scutcheon.

ELEANOR. Hedge me not :
Do you yourself, within your royal soul,
Believe Earl Simon had a traitor's heart ?

KING EDWARD. I loved de Montfort and I honoured him
And, on my faith as a crusader, still
I love and honour him. I would, by Christ,
I had ridden up in time on Evesham's field
Before they struck him down ! I would myself
Have taken him ; to me he would have yielded.
I would have borne him from that battle-ground
Even such a prisoner as was Indian Porus
To the great Macedonian, Alexander ;
And royal had been my dealing with my uncle.

ELEANOR. You found him like a stag, dead in the midst
Of triumphing dogs—a lordlier than his slayers !
You found him—yea, I will remember and tell ;
I have paced the dungeon of my terrible thoughts
Too long to fear its visioned darkness !—maimed,
Hacked, gashed with felon holes and bloody vents
Beyond the innumerable stabs that blotched
The mighty Cæsar ! And I stoop to ask
The favour of his conqueror for his sons !

KING EDWARD. You ask within this fountain's shadow,
much.

ELEANOR. Hear me no more, then, as Earl Simon's wife ;
But hear me as the mother—as a wild-fowl
Who pleads for her poor brood, her scattered chicks,
With ignorant little callings of dismay
When twilight and the foxes are in league.

KING EDWARD. Have I not come to hear you, aunt ? Say
all
Your mind, and freely. By my surcoat's cross
I have a Christian kindness in my soul.

ELEANOR. They were the sweetest and the softest babes
That ever mother washed upon her lap ;
And now they roam, as they were murderers,
Villains and outcasts, the most desolate ways
Of the earth—like sacrilegious thieves, my sons !
Shall not a mother cry forth to the stars
Her griefs and ashen fears ? I will not veil
My face, nor bow my head ; I will uplook
To Heaven and cry aloud to Heaven, yea, shout
My sorrows through the chinks of the awful air
That rolls the ripples on the Jasper Sea !
You are a king and go hence to your realm
Both day and night imperially to be tasked.
But they lie out afar in banishment ;
And lusts of young revolt and young despair
Are like a plague in wait about the walls
Of some mosaiced city of the East !
Sour is the wine of youth in exile, full
Of bitter husks is disappointment's bread.
Have they no fellowship with those who build
The morrow of England with their father's bricks ?
They are so finely tempered, chivalrous,
And high in hopes—so dispossessed of name !
Alas, I had not begun to speak, and now—
Look you, I cannot speak, nor plead, nor beg
For a poor, shaken voice and an old rheum
Of the eyes . . . And yet, I think, a mother's tears
Are louder than the seven great trumpeting
That loosened Jericho into the dust !
O Edward . . .

KING EDWARD. Hush ! Send them to England, aunt,
I will receive them for the blameless sake
Of tears and motherhood, and will employ them
Hereafter as they merit.

ELEANOR. Was that music ?
I heard a lute in the air, methought. Ah, no ;
It was thy words upon my heartstrings, Edward !
God bless thee, oh, God bless thee ! Still I weep,
See, still I weep—but they are happy tears.

KING EDWARD. Bid them seek out their cousin and their
king
At London.

ELEANOR. Aye, with speedy diligence.
For hearken : with a mother's wariness
I bade them hither—with a faith in hope—
When first I heard you had sailed from Palestine
To take your sceptre and would ride through France.
And Prince Llewellyn, affianced to my daughter,
Has ridden south to olived Italy
To haste their timely coming.

KING EDWARD. Prince Llewellyn ?
Is he the wooer of your Alianore ?
Why, then, your Alianore may work for England,
Beside her brothers, when Llewellyn's wife.
Wales should be held in fee from England's crown ;
I covet Wales. My dreams are of an isle
Imperial ; Wales and Scotland do I covet.
Leopards and lions in league might rule the world !
Not flame is more imperious than my will
To get me back to England : such a work
Waiting my hands as makes my destiny
Wellnigh beyond ambition—yet not beyond !
Nor is my task alone the warrior's, no,
But the lawgiver's, too ; and Runnymede,
Which was Earl Simon's oriflamme of battle,
Shall be my oriflamme of peace, till law
Be 'stablished as a star above my gates,
Above my throne !

ELEANOR. And in that high emprise
Shall they, my sons, Earl Simon's sons, ride out,
Knights-errant 'gainst the wrongs their father
fought !
I thank thee, Edward ! Oh, but thou shalt find
They are comely men and honourable and sweet,
Fit kinsmen for a king, worthy the clasp
Of a king's hand in friendship—aye, the sons,
King Edward, of Earl Simon's very spirit !

KING EDWARD. So let them prove ! And, for my uncle's
sake,
I will be proved their fellow. What peace is here !
I love a fountain's spire and scattering splash.
Yet cloistered lives are exiles from the world ;
For me the council-chamber and the camp !

ELEANOR. Ever thou wert a warrior. As a boy
I do remember thee with thy long sword—
'Twas longer than thyself in very sooth !—
Hacking at trees in Windsor Forest, crying
'Down, Saracens ! To me, ye Paladins !'
Thou wert a fiery princeling !

KING EDWARD. I remember
How once a rotted bough I smote crashed down—
As verily 'twere a mace a knight had swung !—
Chipping my head, and how I ran to you
And how you bound it up.

ELEANOR. And here 'tis thou
Who bindest up my wounds !—the bitter stabs
I have had from life. Thou dost not know how good
The binding up of my hot wounds has been !

KING EDWARD. And you yourself must come to England
to me . . .

ELEANOR. No ; leave me here in such poor peace as widows
May claim of time this side the eternal date !

(ALIANORE, followed by PRINCE LLEWELLYN, comes from
the upper gardens.)

ALIANORE. 'Tis Prince Llewellyn, mother—

ELEANOR. And my sons ?

LLEWELLYN. O gracious madam . . .

ELEANOR. But your voice, your voice—
It trembles, Prince !

LLEWELLYN. Dear lady—

ELEANOR. They are dead !

Oh, God is still the Old Rogue !

LLEWELLYN. Nay, madam, nay ;

Both of them live.

ELEANOR.

To what, then, have I now

To listen ?

ALIANORE (*kneeling and burying her head in her mother's lap*).

Mother . . . mother . . . mother . . .

ELEANOR.

Speak !

Tell all, and at a gust !

LEWELLYN.

I faithfully shall,

If in the presence of this new majesty

I have permission.

KING EDWARD (*clasping the other's hand*). Stay not, noble Prince,

On ceremony, nor on greeting ; speak.

LLEWELLYN. I rode into Viterbo—where your sons

Upon report were lodged—even as the bells

Clanged ten long brazen notes through morning's
air.

I met but one blind beggar in the streets,
The Holy Conclave for the Papacy
Filling the town with great ecclesiasts
And princes of the world, and they all gone
Into a church to hear a Lenten Mass,
With the good townsfolk thronging at their heels,
Agape to learn if mightinesses prayed
As other men ! Leading my horse—the stones
Uneven, and slippery, too, from nightlong drench
Of heaviest rain—I neared an old, grey church
Built on a broad ascent of marble steps,
A church sequestered and, that morning, void
Of concourse, with no mass, the gorgeous crowd—
The dignitaries and ecclesiarchs—
Having assembled in the greater fane
Fronting the Tritoned fountain in the Square.
I had but half lifted hand to cross my breast
When, from the doors, upon a sudden, broke
Two men and, sagging in their hold, a third—
A third all gashed and bloody from the steel
Of the other two, who hurled him down the steps,

A murdered man ; there, headlong prone, he
sprawled,

His gold locks in the gutter at the foot !

ELEANOR. Which of my sons is dead ? You lied to me,
Saying they both were living : one is dead !

LLEWELLYN. Then spake the one to the other murderer,
Standing atop the steps : ' We have had revenge !'
And cried his fellow, pointing grimly down,
Like an exultant fiend to some torn star :
' Henry of Almaine, now we have had revenge !
So was our father dragged about and stabbed !'

KING EDWARD. Henry of Almaine ! What ? My royal
cousin,
Heir, till I be a father, to my crown ?
Slain ? Slain by— Now, by dead God on the Cross,
This is a ghastly tidings !

LLEWELLYN. Fugitives
And hunted, sacrilegers, murderers,
They roam in the Maremma ! All is told.

KING EDWARD. By Termagant, but I will see them
hanged,
Beheaded, and impaled, and burnt to ash,
And flung into the wind ! The heir to England
Slain by a traitor's whelps ! Attend me, Prince,
Unto my horse, and tell me, as we go,
What of this crime you further can relate.
Married not yet a month to her he loved !
Farewell !

(He turns to go. On the topmost step he looks back.)

O mother of your sons, I would,
By very God, that I could comfort you !
I thank high Heaven I was not born a woman—
To be a mother ! Christ hung upon the tree
Six hours ; the crucifixion of a mother,
Beginning in her pangs, has never close.
I leave you unto God's tremendous pity !

(He goes, attended by PRINCE LLEWELLYN.)

ALIANORE. They were the kindest and the goodliest
brothers

That ever sister had for little playmates !

Mother, you hurt my arm ! And now your hand

Is like a palsied hand ! What is it, mother ?

Speak to me ! Speak to me !

*(Terrified at the silence of her seizure-stricken mother,
she screams.)*

Llewellyn ! Llewellyn !

1919.

WHEN from the script of wisest chroniclers
We learn how vain the endeavour of the past ;
Or when the poet, divine iconoclast,
Breaks with a wingéd song the heart which errs ;
Or when by clearest-souled philosophers
Are the easy faiths made straws upon the blast,
Then man, in disillusion, grows aghast,
Doubting himself and life's interpreters.
And yet if imperfection may presume
Perfection, as the rotted bough the tree,
Or as the withered rose-leaves may the rose,
Then must the long, disheartening overthrows
Betoken the predestined victory,
Till Heaven's vast light annul the swarth of doom.

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